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THE PORTRAIT.

A STORY OF THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN.

At the period when the following incidents occurred I was living with my father at The Grove, a large old house in the immediate neighbourhood of a little town. This had been his home for a number of years ; and I believe I was born in it. It was a kind of house which, notwithstanding all the red and white architecture, known at present by the name of Queen Anne, builders nowadays have forgotten how to build. It was straggling and irregular, with wide passages, wide staircases, broad landings ; the rooms large but not very lofty ; the arrangements leaving much to be desired, with no economy of space ; a house belonging to a period when land was cheap, and, so far as that was concerned, there was no occasion to economise. Though it was so near the town, the clump of trees in which it was environed was a veritable grove. In the grounds in spring the primroses grew as thickly as in the forest. We had

a few fields for the cows, and an excellent walled garden. The place is being pulled down at this moment to make room for more streets of mean little houses,—the kind of thing, and not a dull house of faded gentry, which perhaps the neighbourhood requires. The house was dull, and so were we, its last inhabitants ; and the furniture was faded, even a little dingy,—nothing to brag of. I do not, however, intend to convey a suggestion that we were faded gentry, for that was not the case. My father, indeed, was rich, and had no need to spare any expense in making his life and his house bright if he pleased ; but he did not please, and I had not been long enough at home to exercise any special influence of my own. It was the only home I had ever known ; but except in my earliest childhood, and in my holidays as a schoolboy, I had in reality known but little of it. My mother had died at my birth, or shortly

after, and I had grown up in the gravity and silence of a house without women. In my infancy, I believe, a sister of my father's had lived with us, and taken charge of the household and of me; but she, too, had died long, long ago, my mourning for her being one of the first things I could recollect. And she had no successor. There was, indeed, a housekeeper and some maids,—the latter of whom I only saw disappearing at the end of a passage, or whisking out of a room when one of “the gentlemen” appeared. Mrs Weir, indeed, I saw nearly every day; but a curtsy, a smile, a pair of nice round arms which she caressed while folding them across her ample waist, and a large white apron, were all I knew of her. This was the only female influence in the house. The drawing-room I was aware of only as a place of deadly good order, into which nobody ever entered. It had three long windows opening on the lawn, and communicated at the upper end, which was rounded like a great bay, with the conservatory. Sometimes I gazed into it as a child from without, wondering at the needlework on the chairs, the screens, the looking-glasses which never reflected any living face. My father did not like the room, which probably was not wonderful, though it never occurred to me in those early days to inquire why.

I may say here, though it will probably be disappointing to those who form a sentimental idea of the capabilities of children, that it did not occur to me either, in these early days, to make any inquiry about my mother. There was no room in life, as I knew it, for any such person; nothing suggested to my mind either the fact that she must have existed, or that there

was need of her in the house. I accepted, as I believe most children do, the facts of existence, on the basis with which I had first made acquaintance with them, without question or remark. As a matter of fact, I was aware that it was rather dull at home; but neither by comparison with the books I read, nor by the communications received from my school-fellows, did this seem to me anything remarkable. And I was possibly somewhat dull too by nature, for I did not mind. I was fond of reading, and for that there was unbounded opportunity. I had a little ambition in respect to work, and that too could be prosecuted undisturbed. When I went to the university, my society lay almost entirely among men; but by that time and afterwards, matters had of course greatly changed with me, and though I recognised women as part of the economy of nature, and did not indeed by any means dislike or avoid them, yet the idea of connecting them at all with my own home never entered into my head. That continued to be as it had always been, when at intervals I descended upon the cool, grave, colourless place, in the midst of my traffic with the world: always very still, well-ordered, serious—the cooking very good, the comfort perfect—old Morpew, the butler, a little older (but very little older, perhaps on the whole less old, since in my childhood I had thought him a kind of Methuselah), and Mrs Weir, less active, covering up her arms in sleeves, but folding and caressing them just as always. I remember looking in from the lawn through the windows upon that deadly-orderly drawing-room, with a humorous recollection of my childish admiration and wonder, and feeling that it must be kept so

for ever and ever, and that to go into it would break some sort of amusing mock mystery, some pleasantly ridiculous spell.

But it was only at rare intervals that I went home. In the long vacation, as in my school holidays, my father often went abroad with me, so that we had gone over a great deal of the Continent together very pleasantly. He was old in proportion to the age of his son, being a man of sixty when I was twenty, but that did not disturb the pleasure of the relations between us. I don't know that they were ever very confidential. On my side there was but little to communicate, for I did not get into scrapes nor fall in love, the two predicaments which demand sympathy and confidences. And as for my father himself, I was never aware what there could be to communicate on his side. I knew his life exactly—what he did almost at every hour of the day; under what circumstances of the temperature he would ride and when walk; how often and with what guests he would indulge in the occasional break of a dinner-party, a serious pleasure,—perhaps, indeed, less a pleasure than a duty. All this I knew as well as he did, and also his views on public matters, his political opinions, which naturally were different from mine. What ground, then, remained for confidence! I did not know any. We were both of us of a reserved nature, not apt to enter into our religious feelings, for instance. There are many people who think reticence on such subjects a sign of the most reverential way of contemplating them. Of this I am far from being sure; but, at all events, it was the practice most congenial to my own mind.

And then I was for a long time

absent, making my own way in the world. I did not make it very successfully. I accomplished the natural fate of an Englishman, and went out to the Colonies; then to India in a semi-diplomatic position; but returned home after seven or eight years, invalided, in bad health and not much better spirits, tired and disappointed with my first trial of life. I had, as people say, "no occasion" to insist on making my way. My father was rich, and had never given me the slightest reason to believe that he did not intend me to be his heir. His allowance to me was not illiberal, and though he did not oppose the carrying out of my own plans, he by no means urged me to exertion. When I came home he received me very affectionately, and expressed his satisfaction in my return. "Of course," he said, "I am not glad that you are disappointed, Philip, or that your health is broken; but otherwise it is an ill wind, you know, that blows nobody good—and I am very glad to have you at home. I am growing an old man——"

"I don't see any difference, sir," said I; "everything here seems exactly the same as when I went away——"

He smiled, and shook his head. "It is true enough," he said, "after we have reached a certain age we seem to go on for a long time on a plane, and feel no great difference from year to year; but it is an inclined plane—and the longer we go on the more sudden will be the fall at the end. But at all events it will be a great comfort to me to have you here."

"If I had known that," I said, "and that you wanted me, I should have come in any circumstances. As there are only two of us in the world——"

"Yes," he said, "there are only

two of us in the world ; but still I should not have sent for you, Phil, to interrupt your career."

"It is as well, then, that it has interrupted itself," I said, rather bitterly; for disappointment is hard to bear.

He patted me on the shoulder, and repeated, "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good," with a look of real pleasure which gave me a certain gratification too ; for, after all, he was an old man, and the only one in all the world to whom I owed any duty. I had not been without dreams of warmer affections, but they had come to nothing—not tragically, but in the ordinary way. I might perhaps have had love which I did not want, but not that which I did want,—which was not a thing to make any unmanly moan about, but in the ordinary course of events. Such disappointments happen every day ; indeed, they are more common than anything else, and sometimes it is apparent afterwards that it is better it was so.

However, here I was at thirty stranded—yet wanting for nothing, in a position to call forth rather envy than pity from the greater part of my contemporaries,—for I had an assured and comfortable existence, as much money as I wanted, and the prospect of an excellent fortune for the future. On the other hand, my health was still low, and I had no occupation. The neighbourhood of the town was a drawback rather than an advantage. I felt myself tempted, instead of taking the long walk into the country which my doctor recommended, to take a much shorter one through the High Street, across the river, and back again, which was not a walk but a lounge. The country was silent and full of thoughts—thoughts not always very agreeable—whereas

there were always the humours of the little urban population to glance at, the news to be heard, all those petty matters which so often make up life in a very impoverished version for the idle man. I did not like it, but I felt myself yielding to it, not having energy enough to make a stand. The rector and the leading lawyer of the place asked me to dinner. I might have glided into the society, such as it was, had I been disposed for that—everything about me began to close over me as if I had been fifty, and fully contented with my lot.

It was possibly my own want of occupation which made me observe with surprise, after a while, how much occupied my father was. He had expressed himself glad of my return ; but now that I had returned, I saw very little of him. Most of his time was spent in his library, as had always been the case. But on the few visits I paid him there, I could not but perceive that the aspect of the library was much changed. It had acquired the look of a business-room, almost an office. There were large business-like books on the table, which I could not associate with anything he could naturally have to do ; and his correspondence was very large. I thought he closed one of those books hurriedly as I came in, and pushed it away, as if he did not wish me to see it. This surprised me at the moment without arousing any other feeling : but afterwards I remembered it with a clearer sense of what it meant. He was more absorbed altogether than I had been used to see him. He was visited by men sometimes not of very prepossessing appearance. Surprise grew in my mind without any very distinct idea of the reason of it ; and it was not till after a chance

conversation with Morphey that my vague uneasiness began to take definite shape. It was begun without any special intention on my part. Morphey had informed me that master was very busy, on some occasion when I wanted to see him. And I was a little annoyed to be thus put off. "It appears to me that my father is always busy," I said, hastily. Morphey then began very oracularly to nod his head in assent.

"A deal too busy, sir, if you take my opinion," he said.

This startled me much, and I asked hurriedly, "What do you mean?" without reflecting that to ask for private information from a servant about my father's habits was as bad as investigating into a stranger's affairs. It did not strike me in the same light.

"Mr. Philip," said Morphey, "a thing 'as 'appened as 'appens more often than it ought to. Master has got awful keen about money in his old age."

"That's a new thing for him," I said.

"No, sir, begging your pardon, it aint a new thing. He was once broke of it, and that wasn't easy done; but it's come back, if you'll excuse me saying so. . And I don't know as he'll ever be broke of it again at his age."

I felt more disposed to be angry than disturbed by this. "You must be making some ridiculous mistake," I said. "And if you were not so old a friend as you are, Morphey, I should not have allowed my father to be so spoken of to me."

The old man gave me a half-astonished, half-contemptuous look. "He's been my master a deal longer than he's been your father," he said, turning on his heel. The assumption was so comical that my anger could not stand in face of it. I went

out, having been on my way to the door when this conversation occurred, and took my usual lounge about, which was not a satisfactory sort of amusement. Its vanity and emptiness appeared to be more evident than usual to-day. I met half-a-dozen people I knew, and had as many pieces of news confided to me. I went up and down the length of the High Street. I made a small purchase or two. And then I turned homeward—despising myself, yet finding no alternative within my reach. Would a long country walk have been more virtuous!—it would at least have been more wholesome—but that was all that could be said. My mind did not dwell on Morphey's communication. It seemed without sense or meaning to me; and after the excellent joke about his superior interest in his master to mine in my father, was dismissed lightly enough from my mind. I tried to invent some way of telling this to my father without letting him perceive that Morphey had been finding faults in him, or I listening; for it seemed a pity to lose so good a joke. However, as I returned home, something happened which put the joke entirely out of my head. It is curious when a new subject of trouble or anxiety has been suggested to the mind in an unexpected way, how often a second advertisement follows immediately after the first, and gives to that a potency which in itself it had not possessed.

I was approaching our own door, wondering whether my father had gone, and whether, on my return, I should find him at leisure—for I had several little things to say to him—when I noticed a poor woman lingering about the closed gates. She had a baby sleeping in her arms. It was a spring night, the

stars shining in the twilight, and everything soft and dim ; and the woman's figure was like a shadow, flitting about, now here, now there, on one side or another of the gate. She stopped when she saw me approaching, and hesitated for a moment, then seemed to take a sudden resolution. I watched her without knowing, with a prevision that she was going to address me, though with no sort of idea as to the subject of her address. She came up to me doubtfully, it seemed, yet certainly, as I felt, and when she was close to me, dropped a sort of hesitating curtsy, and said, "It's Mr. Philip?" in a low voice.

"What do you want with me?" I said.

Then she poured forth suddenly, without warning or preparation, her long speech—a flood of words which must have been all ready and waiting at the doors of her lips for utterance. "Oh, sir, I want to speak to you! I can't believe you'll be so hard, for you're young; and I can't believe he'll be so hard if so be as his own son, as I've always heard he had but one, 'll speak up for us. Oh, gentleman, it is easy for the likes of you, that, if you aint comfortable in one room, can just walk into another; but if one room is all you have, and every bit of furniture you have taken out of it, and nothing but the four walls left—not so much as the cradle for the child, or a chair for your man to sit down upon when he comes from his work, or a saucepan to cook him his supper——"

"My good woman," I said, "who can have taken all that from you? surely nobody can be so cruel?"

"You say it's cruel!" she cried with a sort of triumph. "Oh, I knowed you would, or any true gentleman that don't hold with screwing poor folks. Just go and say that to him inside there, for

the love of God. Tell him to think what he's doing, driving poor creatures to despair. Summer's coming, the Lord be praised, but yet it's bitter cold at night with your counterpane gone; and when you've been working hard all day, and nothing but four bare walls to come home to, and all your poor little sticks of furniture that you've saved up for, and got together one by one, all gone—and you no better than when you started, or rather worse, for then you was young. Oh, sir!" the woman's voice rose into a sort of passionate wail. And then she added, beseechingly, recovering herself—"Oh, speak for us—he'll not refuse his own son——"

"To whom am I to speak? who is it that has done this to you?" I said.

The woman hesitated again, looking keenly in my face—then repeated with a slight faltering, "It's Mr. Philip?" as if that made everything right.

"Yes; I am Philip Canning," I said; "but what have I to do with this? and to whom am I to speak?"

She began to whimper, crying and stopping herself. "Oh, please sir! it's Mr. Canning as owns all the house property about—it's him that our court and the lane and everything belongs to. And he's taken the bed from under us, and the baby's cradle, although it's said in the Bible as you're not to take poor folks' bed."

"My father!" I cried in spite of myself—"then it must be some agent, some one else in his name. You may be sure he knows nothing of it. Of course I shall speak to him at once."

"Oh, God bless you, sir," said the woman. But then she added, in a lower tone—"It's no agent It's one as never knows trouble

It's him that lives in that grand house." But this was said under her breath, evidently not for me to hear.

Morphew's words flashed through my mind as she spoke. What was this? Did it afford an explanation of the much occupied hours, the big books, the strange visitors? I took the poor woman's name, and gave her something to procure a few comforts for the night, and went indoors disturbed and troubled. It was impossible to believe that my father himself would have acted thus; but he was not a man to brook interference, and I did not see how to introduce the subject, what to say. I could but hope that, at the moment of broaching it, words would be put into my mouth, which often happens in moments of necessity, one knows not how, even when one's theme is not so all-important as that for which such help has been promised. As usual, I did not see my father till dinner. I have said that our dinners were very good, luxurious in a simple way, everything excellent in its kind, well cooked, well served, the perfection of comfort without show—which is a combination very dear to the English heart. I said nothing till Morpheu, with his [solemn attention to everything that was going, had retired—and then it was with some strain of courage that I began.

"I was stopped outside the gate to-day by a curious sort of petitioner—a poor woman, who seems to be one of your tenants, sir, but whom your agent must have been rather too hard upon."

"My agent? who is that?" said my father, quietly.

"I don't know his name and I doubt his competence. The poor creature seems to have had every-

thing taken from her—her bed, her child's cradle."

"No doubt she was behind with her rent."

"Very likely, sir. She seemed very poor," said I.

"You take it coolly," said my father, with an upward glance, half-amused, not in the least shocked by my statement. "But when a man or a woman either, takes a house, I suppose you will allow that they ought to pay rent for it."

"Certainly, sir," I replied, "when they have got anything to pay."

"I don't allow the reservation," he said. But he was not angry, which I had feared he would be.

"I think," I continued, "that your agent must be too severe. And this emboldens me to say something which has been in my mind for some time"—(these were the words, no doubt, which I had hoped would be put into my mouth; they were the suggestion of the moment, and yet as I said them it was with the most complete conviction of their truth)—"and that is this: I am doing nothing; my time hangs heavy on my hands. Make me your agent. I will see for myself, and save you from such mistakes; and it will be an occupation——"

"Mistakes? What warrant have you for saying these are mistakes?" he said testily; then after a moment: "This is a strange proposal from you, Phil. Do you know what it is you are offering?—to be a collector of rents, going about from door to door, from week to week; to look after wretched little bits of repairs, drains, &c; to get paid, which, after all, is the chief thing, and not to be taken in by tales of poverty."

"Not to let you be taken in by men without pity," I said.

He gave me a strange glance

which I did not very well understand, and said, abruptly, a thing which, so far as I remember, he had never in my life said before, "You've become a little like your mother, Phil——"

"My mother!" The reference was so unusual—nay, so unprecedented—that I was greatly startled. It seemed to me like the sudden introduction of a quite new element in the stagnant atmosphere, as well as a new party to our conversation. My father looked across the table, as if with some astonishment at my tone of surprise.

"Is that so very extraordinary?" he said.

"No; of course it is not extraordinary that I should resemble my mother. Only—I have heard very little of her—almost nothing."

"That is true." He got up and placed himself before the fire, which was very low, as the night was not cold—had not been cold heretofore at least; but it seemed to me now that a little chill came into the dim and faded room. Perhaps it looked more dull from the suggestion of a something brighter, warmer, that might have been. "Talking of mistakes," he said, "perhaps that was one: to sever you entirely from her side of the house. But I did not care for the connection. You will understand how it is that I speak of it now when I tell you——" He stopped here, however, said nothing more for a minute or so, and then rang the bell. Morphew came, as he always did, very deliberately, so that some time elapsed in silence, during which my surprise grew. When the old man appeared at the door—"Have you put the lights in the drawing-room, as I told you?" my father said.

"Yes, sir; and opened the box, sir; and it's a—it's a speaking likeness——"

This the old man got out in a great hurry, as if afraid that his master would stop him. My father did so with a wave of his hand.

"That's enough. I asked no information. You can go now."

The door closed upon us, and there was again a pause. My subject had floated away altogether like a mist, though I had been so concerned about it. I tried to resume, but could not. Something seemed to arrest my very breathing; and yet in this dull respectable house of ours, where everything breathed good character and integrity, it was certain that there could be no shameful mystery to reveal. It was some time before my father spoke, not from any purpose that I could see, but apparently because his mind was busy with probably unaccustomed thoughts.

"You scarcely know the drawing-room, Phil," he said at last.

"Very little. I have never seen it used. I have a little awe of it, to tell the truth."

"That should not be. There is no reason for that. But a man by himself, as I have been for the greater part of my life, has no occasion for a drawing-room. I always, as a matter of preference, sat among my books; however, I ought to have thought of the impression on you."

"Oh; it is not important." I said; "the awe was childish. I have not thought of it since I came home."

"It never was anything very splendid at the best," said he. He lifted the lamp from the table with a sort of abstraction, not remarking even my offer to take it from him, and led the way. He was on the verge of seventy, and looked his age: but it was a vigorous age, with no symptom of giving way. The circle of light from the lamp lit up his white hair, and

keen blue eyes, and clear complexion; his forehead was like old ivory, his cheek warmly coloured; an old man, yet a man in full strength. He was taller than I was, and still almost as strong. As he stood for a moment with the lamp in his hand, he looked

like a tower in his great height and bulk. I reflected as I looked at him that I knew him intimately, more intimately than any other creature in the world,—I was familiar with every detail of his outward life; could it be that in reality I did not know him at all?

The drawing-room was already lighted with a flickering array of candles upon the mantelpiece and along the walls, producing the pretty starry effect which candles give without very much light. As I had not the smallest idea what I was about to see, for Morpheus's "speaking likeness" was very hurriedly said, and only half comprehensible in the bewilderment of my faculties, my first glance was at this very unusual illumination, for which I could assign no reason. The next showed me a large full-length portrait, still in the box in which apparently it had travelled, placed upright supported against a table in the center of the room. My father walked straight up to it, motioned to me to place a smaller table close to the picture on the left side, and put his lamp upon that. Then he waved his hand towards it, and stood aside that I might see.

It was a full-length portrait of a very young woman—I might say a girl scarcely twenty—in a white dress, made in a very simple old fashion, though I was too little accustomed to female costume to be able to fix the date. It might have been a hundred years old, or twenty, for aught I knew. The face had an expression of youth, candour, and simplicity more than any face I had ever seen,—or so, at least in my surprise, I thought. The eyes were a little wistful, with something which was

almost anxiety—which at least was not content—in them; a faint, almost imperceptible, curve in the lids. The complexion was of a dazzling fairness, the hair light, but the eyes dark, which gave individuality to the face. It would have been as lovely had the eyes been blue—probably more so—but their darkness gave a touch of character, a slight discord, which made the harmony finer. It was not, perhaps, beautiful in the highest sense of the word. The girl must have been too young, too slight, too little developed for actual beauty; but a face which so invited love and confidence I never saw. One smiled at it with instinctive affection. "What a sweet face!" I said. "What a lovely girl! Who is she? Is this one of the relations you were speaking of on the other side?"

My father made me no reply. He stood aside, looking at it as if he knew it too well to require to look,—as if the picture was already in his eyes. "Yes," he said, after an interval, with a long-drawn breath, "she was a lovely girl, as you say."

"Was?—then she is dead. What a pity!" I said; what a pity! so young and so sweet!"

We stood gazing at her thus, in her beautiful stillness and calm—two men, the younger of us full grown and conscious of many experiences, the other an old man—before this impersonation of tender

youth. At length he said, with a slight tremulousness in his voice, "Does nothing suggest to you who she is, Phil?"

I turned round to look at him with profound astonishment, but he turned away from my look. A sort of quiver passed over his face. "That is your mother," he said, and walked suddenly away, leaving me there.

My mother!

I stood for a moment in a kind of consternation before the white-robed innocent creature, to me no more than a child; than a sudden laugh broke from me, without any will of mine: something ludicrous, as well as something awful, was in it. When the laugh was over, I found myself with tears in my eyes, gazing, holding my breath. The soft features seemed to melt, the lips to move, the anxiety in the eyes to become a personal inquiry. Ah, no! nothing of the kind; only because of the water in mine. My mother! oh, fair and gentle creature, scarcely woman—how could any man's voice call her by that name! I had little idea enough of what it meant,—had heard it laughed at, scoffed at, revered, but never had learned to place it even among the ideal powers of life. Yet if it meant anything at all, what it meant was worth thinking of. What did she ask, looking at me with those eyes? what would she have said if "those lips had language?" If I had known her only as Cowper did—with a child's recollection—there might have been some thread, some faint but comprehensible link, between us; but now all that I felt was the curious incongruity. Poor child! I said to myself; so sweet a creature: poor little tender soul! as if she had been a little sister, a child of mine,—but my mother! I cannot tell how long I stood

looking at her, studying the candid, sweet face, which surely had germs in it of everything that was good and beautiful; and sorry, with a profound regret, that she had died and never carried these promises to fulfilment. Poor girl! poor people who had loved her! These were my thoughts: with a curious vertigo and giddiness of my whole being in the sense of a mysterious relationship, which it was beyond my power to understand.

Presently my father came back: possibly because I had been a long time unconscious of the passage of the minutes, or perhaps because he was himself restless in the strange disturbance of his habitual calm. He came in and put his arms within mine, leaning his weight partially upon me, with an affectionate suggestion which went deeper than words. I pressed his arm to my side: it was more between us two grave Englishmen than any embracing.

"I cannot understand it," I said.

"No. I don't wonder at that; but if it is strange to you, Phil, think how much more strange to me! That is the partner of my life. I have never had another—or thought of another. That—girl! If we are to meet again, as I have always hoped we should meet again, what am I to say to her—I, an old man? Yes; I know what you mean. I am not an old man for my years; but my years are threescore and ten, and the play is nearly played out. How am I to meet that young creature? We used to say to each other that it was for ever, that we never could be but one, that it was for life and death. But what—what am I to say to her, Phil, when I meet her again, that—that angel? No, it is not her being an angel that troubles me; but she is so

young ! She is like my—my granddaughter,” he cried, with a burst of what was half sobs, half laughter ; “and she is my wife,—and I am an old man—an old man ! And so much has happened that she could not understand.”

I was too much startled by this strange complaint to know what to say. It was not my own trouble, and I answered it in the conventional way.

“They are not as we are, sir,” I said ; “they look upon us with larger, other eyes than ours.”

“Ah ! you don’t know what I mean,” he said quickly ; and in the interval he had subdued his emotion. “At first, after she died, it was my consolation to think that I should meet her again—that we never could be really parted. But, my God, how I have changed since then ! I am another man—I am a different being. I was not very young even then—twenty years older than she was ; but her youth renewed mine. I was not an unfit partner ; she asked no better : and knew as much more than I did in some things—being so much nearer the source—as I did in others that were of the world. But I have gone a long way since then, Phil—a long way ; and there she stands just where I left her.”

I pressed his arm again. “Father,” I said, which was a title I seldom used, “we are not to suppose that in a higher life the mind stands still.” I did not feel myself qualified to discuss such topics, but something one must say.

“Worse, worse !” he replied ; “then she too will be like me, a different being, and we shall meet as what ? as strangers, as people who have lost sight of each other, with a long past between us—we who parted, my God ! with—
with—”

His voice broke and ended for a moment : then while, surprised and almost shocked by what he said, I cast about in my mind what to reply, he withdrew his arm suddenly from mine, and said in his usual tone, “Where shall we hang the picture, Phil ? It must be here in this room. What do you think will be the best light ?”

This sudden alteration took me still more by surprise, and gave me almost an additional shock ; but it was evident that I must follow the changes of his mood, or at least the sudden repression of sentiment which he originated. We went into that simpler question with great seriousness, consulting which would be the best light. “You know I can scarcely advise,” I said ; “I have never been familiar with this room. I should like to put off, if you don’t mind, till daylight.”

“I think,” he said, “that this would be the best place.” It was on the other side of the fireplace, on the wall which faced the windows,—not the best light, I knew enough to be aware, for an oil-painting. When I said so, however, he answered me with a little impatience,—“It does not matter very much about the best light. There will be nobody to see it but you and me. I have my reasons——” There was a small table standing against the wall at this spot, on which he had his hand as he spoke. Upon it stood a little basket in very fine lace-like wickerwork. His hand must have trembled, for the table shook, and the basket fell, its contents turning out upon the carpet,—little bits of needlework, coloured silks, a small piece of knitting half done. He laughed as they rolled out at his feet, and tried to stoop to collect them, then tottered to a chair, and

covered for a moment his face with his hands.

No need to ask what they were. No woman's work had been seen in the house since I could recollect it. I gathered them up reverently and put them back. I could see, ignorant as I was, that the bit of knitting was something for an infant. What could I do less than put it to my lips? It had been left in the doing—for me.

"Yes, I think this is the best place," my father said a minute after, in his usual tone.

We placed it there that evening with our own hands. The picture was large, and in a heavy frame, but my father would let no one help me but himself. And then, with a superstition for which I never could give any reason even to myself, having removed the packings, we closed and locked the door, leaving the candles about the room, in their soft strange illumination lighting the first night of her return to her old place.

That night no more was said. My father went to his room early, which was not his habit. He had never, however, accustomed me to sit late with him in the library. I had a little study or smoking-room of my own, in which all my special treasures were, the collections of my travels and my favourite books—and where I always sat after prayers, a ceremonial which was regularly kept up in the house. I retired as usual this night to my room, and as usual read—but to-night somewhat vaguely, often pausing to think. When it was quite late, I went out by the glass door to the lawn, and walked round the house, with the intention of looking in at the drawing-room windows, as I had done when a child. But I had forgotten that these windows were all shuttered at night, and nothing but a faint

penetration of the light within through the crevices bore witness to the instalment of the new dweller there.

In the morning my father was entirely himself again. He told me without emotion of the manner in which he had obtained the picture. It had belonged to my mother's family, and had fallen eventually into the hands of a cousin of hers, resident abroad—"A man whom I did not like, and who did not like me," my father said; "there was, or had been, some rivalry, he thought: a mistake, but he was never aware of that. He refused all my requests to have a copy made. You may suppose, Phil, that I wished this very much. Had I succeeded, you would have been acquainted, at least, with your mother's appearance, and need not have sustained this shock. But he would not consent. It gave him, I think, a certain pleasure to think that he had the only picture. But now he is dead—and out of remorse, or with some other intention, has left it to me."

"That looks like kindness," said I.

"Yes; or something else. He might have thought that by so doing he was establishing a claim upon me," my father said: but he did not seem disposed to add any more. On whose behalf he meant to establish a claim I did not know, nor who the man was who had laid us under so great an obligation on his deathbed. He *had* established a claim on me at least: though, as he was dead, I could not see on whose behalf it was. And my father said nothing more. He seemed to dislike the subject. When I attempted to return to it, he had recourse to his letters or his newspapers. Evidently he had made up his mind to say no more.

Afterwards I went into the drawing-room to look at the picture once more. It seemed to me that the anxiety in her eyes was not so evident as I had thought it last night. The light possibly was more favourable. She stood just above the place where, I make no doubt, she had sat in life, where her little work-basket was—not very much above it. The picture was full-length, and we had hung it low, so that she might have been stepping into the room, and was little above my own level as I stood and looked at her again. Once more I smiled at the strange

thought that this young creature, so young, almost childish, could be my mother; and once more my eyes grew wet looking at her. He was a benefactor, indeed, who had given her back to us. I said to myself, that if I could ever do anything for him or his, I would certainly do, for my—for this lovely young creature's sake.

And with this in my mind, and all the thoughts that came with it, I am obliged to confess that the other matter, which I had been so full of on the previous night, went entirely out of my head.

It is rarely, however, that such matters are allowed to slip out of one's mind. When I went out in the afternoon for my usual stroll—or rather when I returned from that stroll—I saw once more before me the woman with her baby whose story had filled me with dismay on the previous evening. She was waiting at the gate as before, and—“Oh, gentleman, but haven't you got some news to give me?” she said.

“My good woman—I—have been greatly occupied. I have had—no time to do anything.”

“Ah!” she said, with a little cry of disappointment, “my man said not to make too sure, and that the ways of the gentlefolks is hard to know.”

“I cannot explain to you,” I said, as gently as I could, “what it is that has made me forget you. It was an event that can only do you good in the end. Go home now, and see the man that took your things from you, and tell him to come to me. I promise you it shall all be put right.”

The woman looked at me in astonishment, then burst forth, as

it seemed, involuntarily,—“What! without asking no questions?” After this there came a storm of tears and blessings, from which I made haste to escape, but not without carrying that curious commentary on my rashness away with me—“Without asking no questions?” It might be foolish, perhaps: but after all how slight a matter. To make the poor creature comfortable at the cost of what—a box or two of cigars, perhaps, or some other trifle. And if it should be her own fault, or her husband's—what then? Had I been punished for all my faults, where should I have been now. And if the advantage should be only temporary, what then? To be relieved and comforted even for a day or two, was not that something to count in life? Thus I quenched the fiery dart of criticism which my *protégée* herself had thrown into the transaction, not without a certain sense of the humour of it. Its effect, however, was to make me less anxious to see my father, to repeat my proposal to him, and to call his attention to the cruelty performed in his name. This one case

I had taken out of the category of wrongs to be righted, by assuming arbitrarily the position of Providence in my own person—for, of course, I had bound myself to pay the poor creature's rent as well as redeem her goods—and, whatever might happen to her in the future, had taken the past into my own hands. The man came presently to see me who, it seems, had acted as my father's agent in the matter. "I don't know, sir, how Mr Canning will take it," he said. "He don't want none of those irregular, bad-paying ones in his property. He always says as to look over it and let the rent run on is making things worse in the end. His rule is, 'Never more than a month, Stevens : ' that's what Mr Canning says to me, sir.' He says, 'More than that they can't pay. It's no use trying.' And it's a good rule ; it's a very good rule. He won't hear none of their stories, sir. Bless you, you'd never get a penny of rent from them small houses if you listened to their tales. But if so be as you'll pay Mrs Jordan's rent, it's none of my business how it's paid, so long as it's paid, and I'll send her back her things. But they'll just have to be took next time," he added, composedly. "Over and over : it's always the same story with them sort of poor folks—they're too poor for anything, that's the truth," the man said.

Morphew came back to my room after my visitor was gone. "Mr Philip," he said, "you'll excuse me, sir, but if you're going to pay all the poor folk's rent as have distresses put in, you may just go into the court at once, for it's without end——"

"I am going to be the agent myself, Morphew, and manage for my father : and we'll soon put a stop to that," I said, more cheerfully than I felt.

"Manage for—master," he said, with a face of consternation. "You, Mr Philip !"

"You seem to have a great contempt for me, Morphew."

He did not deny the fact. He said with excitement, "Master, sir—master don't let himself be put a stop to by any man. Master's—not one to be managed. Don't you quarrel with master, Mr Philip, for the love of God." The old man was quite pale.

"Quarrel !" I said. "I have never quarrelled with my father, and I don't mean to begin now."

Morphew dispelled his own excitement by making up the fire, which was dying in the grate. It was a very mild spring evening, and he made up a great blaze which would have suited December. This is one of many ways in which an old servant will relieve his mind. He muttered all the time as he threw on the coals and wood. "He'll not like it—we all know as he'll not like it. Master won't stand no meddling, Mr Philip,"—this last he discharged at me like a flying arrow as he closed the door.

I soon found there was truth in what he said. My father was not angry ; he was even half amused. "I don't think that plan of yours will hold water, Phil. I hear you have been paying rents and redeeming furniture—that's an expensive game, and a very profitless one. Of course, so long as you are a benevolent gentleman acting for your own pleasure, it makes no difference to me. I am quite content if I get my money, even out of your pockets—so long as it amuses you. But as my collector, you know, which you are good enough to propose to be——"

"Of course I should act under your orders," I said ; "but at least you might be sure that I would not

commit you to any—to any——” I paused for a word.

“Act of oppression,” he said with a smile—“piece of cruelty, exaction—there are half-a-dozen words——”

“Sir——” I cried.

“Stop, Phil, and let us understand each other. I hope I have always been a just man. I do my duty on my side, and I expect it from others. It is your benevolence that is cruel. I have calculated anxiously how much credit it is safe to allow; but I will allow no man, or woman either, to go beyond what he or she can make up. My law is fixed. Now you understand. My agents, as you call them, originate nothing—they execute only what I decide——”

“But then no circumstances are taken into account—no bad luck, no evil chances, no loss unexpected.”

“There are no evil chances,” he said, “there is no bad luck—they reap as they sow. No, I don’t go among them to be cheated by their stories, and spend quite unnecessary emotion in sympathising with them. You will find it much better for you that I don’t. I deal with them on a general rule, made, I assure you, not without a great deal of thought.”

“And must it always be so?” I said. “Is there no way of ameliorating or bringing in a better state of things?”

“It seems not,” he said; “we don’t get ‘no forrarder’ in that direction so far as I can see.” And then he turned the conversation to general matters.

I retired to my room greatly discouraged that night. In former ages—or so one is led to suppose—and in the lower primitive classes who still linger near the primeval type, action of any kind was, and is, easier than amid the complication of our higher civil-

isation. A bad man is a distinct entity, against whom you know more or less what steps to take. A tyrant, an oppressor, a bad landlord, a man who lets miserable tenements at a rack-rent (to come down to particulars), and exposes his wretched tenants to all those abominations of which we have heard so much—well! he is more or less a satisfactory opponent. There he is, and there is nothing to be said for him—down with him! and let there be an end of his wickedness. But when, on the contrary, you have before you a good man, a just man, who has considered deeply a question which you allow to be full of difficulty; who regrets, but cannot, being human, avert, the miseries which to some unhappy individuals follow from the very wisdom of his rule,—what can you do—what is to be done? Individual benevolence at haphazard may baulk him here and there, but what have you to put in the place of his well-considered scheme? Charity which makes paupers? or what else? I had not considered the question deeply, but it seemed to me that I now came to a blank wall, which my vague human sentiment of pity and scorn could find no way to breach. There must be wrong somewhere—but where? There must be some change for the better to be made—but how?

I was seated with a book before me on the table, with my head supported on my hands. My eyes were on the printed page, but I was not reading—my mind was full of these thoughts, my heart of great discouragement and despondency, a sense that I could do nothing, yet that there surely must and ought, if I but knew it, be something to do. The fire which Morpheus had built up before dinner was dying out, the shaded lamp on my table left all the cor-

ners in a mysterious twilight. The house was perfectly still, no one moving: my father in the library, where, after the habit of many solitary years, he liked to be left alone, and I here in my retreat, preparing for the formation of similar habits. I thought all at once of the third member of the party, the new-comer, alone too in the room that had been hers; and there suddenly occurred to me a strong desire to take up my lamp and go to the drawing-room and visit her, to see whether her soft, angelic face would give any inspiration. I restrained, however, this futile impulse—for what could the picture say?—and instead wondered what might have been had she lived, had she been there, warmly enthroned beside the warm domestic centre, the hearth which would have been a common sanctuary, the true home. In that case what might have been? Alas! the question was no more simple to answer than the other: she might have been there alone too, her husband's business, her son's thoughts, as far from her as now, when her silent representative held her old place in the silence and darkness. I had known it so, often enough. Love itself does not always give comprehension and sympathy. It might be that she was more to us there, in the sweet image of her undeveloped beauty, than she might have been had she lived and grown to maturity and fading, like the rest.

I cannot be certain whether my mind was still lingering on this not very cheerful reflection, or if it had been left behind, when the strange occurrence came of which I have now to tell: can I call it an occurrence? My eyes were on my book, when I thought I heard the sound of a door opening and shutting, but so far away and faint

that if real at all it must have been in a far corner of the house. I did not move except to lift my eyes from the book as one does instinctively the better to listen; when—— But I cannot tell, nor have I ever been able to describe exactly what it was. My heart made all at once a sudden leap in my breast. I am aware that this language is figurative, and that the heart cannot leap: but it is a figure so entirely justified by sensation, that no one will have any difficulty in understanding what I mean. My heart leapt up and began beating wildly in my throat, in my ears, as if my whole being had received a sudden and intolerable shock. The sound went through my head like the dizzy sound of some strange mechanism, a thousand wheels and springs, circling, echoing, working in my brain. I felt the blood bound in my veins, my mouth became dry, my eyes hot, a sense of something insupportable took possession of me. I sprang to my feet, and then I sat down again. I cast a quick glance round me beyond the brief circle of the lamplight, but there was nothing there to account in any way for this sudden extraordinary rush of sensation—nor could I feel any meaning in it, any suggestion, any moral impression. I thought I must be going to be ill, and got out my watch and felt my pulse: it was beating furiously, about 125 throbs in a minute. I knew of no illness that could come on like this without warning, in a moment, and I tried to subdue myself, to say to myself that it was nothing, some flutter of the nerves, some physical disturbance. I laid myself down upon my sofa to try if rest would help me, and kept still—as long as the thumping and throbbing of this wild excited

mechanism within, like a wild beast plunging and struggling, would let me. I am quite aware of the confusion of the metaphor—the reality was just so. It was like a mechanism deranged, going wildly with ever-increasing precipitation, like those horrible wheels that from time to time catch a helpless human being in them and tear him to pieces: but at the same time it was like a maddened living creature making the wildest efforts to get free.

When I could bear this no longer I got up and walked about my room; then having still a certain command of myself, though I could not master the commotion within me, I deliberately took down an exciting book from the shelf, a book of breathless adventure which had always interested me, and tried with that to break the spell. After a few minutes, however, I flung the book aside; I was gradually losing all power over myself. What I should be moved to do,—to shout aloud, to struggle with I know not what; or if I was going mad altogether, and next moment must be a raving lunatic,—I could not tell. I kept looking round, expecting I don't know what: several times with the corner of my eye I seemed to see a movement, as if some one was stealing out of sight; but when I looked straight, there was never anything but the plain outlines of the wall and carpet, the chairs standing in good order. At last I snatched up the lamp in my hand and went out of the room. To look at the picture? which had been faintly showing in my imagination from time to time, the eyes, more anxious than ever, looking at me from out the silent air. But no; I passed the door of that room swiftly, moving, it seemed, without any volition of my own,

and before I knew where I was going, went into my father's library with my lamp in my hand.

He was still sitting there at his writing table; he looked up astonished to see me hurrying in with my light. "Phil!" he said, surprised. I remember that I shut the door behind me, and came up to him, and set down the lamp on his table. My sudden appearance alarmed him. "What is the matter?" he cried. "Philip, what have you been doing with yourself?"

I sat down on the nearest chair and gasped, gazing at him. The wild commotion ceased, the blood subsided into its natural channels, my heart resumed its place. I use such words as mortal weakness can to express the sensations I felt. I came to myself thus, gazing at him, confounded, at once by the extraordinary passion which I had gone through, and its sudden cessation. "The matter?" I cried; "I don't know what is the matter."

My father had pushed his spectacles up from his eyes. He appeared to me as faces appear in a fever, all glorified with light which is not in them—his eyes glowing, his white hair shining like silver; but his looks were severe. "You are not a boy, that I should reprove you; but you ought to know better," he said.

Then I explained to him, so far as I was able, what had happened. Had happened? nothing had happened. He did not understand me—nor did I, now that it was over, understand myself; but he saw enough to make him aware that the disturbance in me was serious, and not caused by any folly of my own. He was very kind as soon as he had assured himself of this, and talked, taking pains to bring me back to unexciting

subjects. He had a letter in his hand with a very deep border of black when I came in. I observed it, without taking any notice or associating it with anything I knew. He had many correspondents, and although we were excellent friends, we had never been on those confidential terms which warrant one man in asking another from whom a special letter has come. We were not so near to each other as this, though we were father and son. After a while I went back to my own room, and finished the evening in my usual way, without any return of the excitement which, now that it was over, looked to me like some extraordinary dream. What had it meant? had it meant anything? I said to myself that it must be purely physical, something gone temporarily amiss, which had righted itself. It was physical; the excitement did not affect my mind. I was independent of it all the time, a spectator of my own agitation—a clear proof that, whatever it was, it had affected my bodily organization alone.

Next day I returned to the problem which I had not been able to solve. I found out my petitioner in the back street, and that she was happy in the recovery of her possessions, which to my eyes indeed did not seem very worthy either of lamentation or delight. Nor was her house the tidy house which injured virtue should have when restored to its humble rights. She was not injured virtue, it was clear. She made me a great many curtsies, and poured forth a number of blessings. Her "man" came in while I was there, and hoped in a gruff voice that God would reward me, and that the old gentleman 'd let 'em alone. I did not

like the look of the man. It seemed to me that in the dark lane behind the house of a winter's night he would not be a pleasant person to find in one's way. Nor was this all: when I went out into the little street which it appeared was all, or almost all, my father's property a number of groups formed in my way, and at least half-a-dozen applicants sidled up. "I've more claims nor Mary Jordan any day," said one; "I've lived on Squire Canning's property, one place and another, this twenty year." "And what do you say to me," said another; "I've six children to her two, bless you, sir, and ne'er a father to do for them." I believed in my father's rule before I got out of the street, and approved his wisdom in keeping himself free from personal contact with his tenants. Yet when I looked back upon the swarming thoroughfare, the mean little houses, the women at their doors all so open-mouthed, and eager to contend for my favour, my heart sank within me at the thought that out of their misery some portion of our wealth came—I don't care how small a portion; that I, young and strong, should be kept idle and in luxury, in some part through the money screwed out of their necessities, obtained sometimes by the sacrifice of everything they prized! Of course I know all the ordinary commonplaces of life as well as any one—that if you build a house with your hand or your money, and let it, the rent of it is your just due, and must be paid. But yet——

"Don't you think, sir," I said that evening at dinner, the subject being reintroduced by my father himself, "that we have some duty towards them when we draw so much from them?"

"Certainly," he said ; " I take as much trouble about their drains as I do about my own."

"That is always something, I suppose."

"Something ! it is a great deal—it is more than they get anywhere else. I keep them clean, as far as that's possible. I give them at least the means of keeping clean, and thus check disease, and prolong life—which is more, I assure you, than they've any right to expect."

I was not prepared with arguments as I ought to have been. That is all in the Gospel according to Adam Smith, which my father had been brought up in, but of which the tenets had begun to be less binding in my day. I wanted something more, or else something less ; but my views were not so clear, nor my system so logical and well-built, as that upon which my father rested his conscience, and drew his percentage with a light heart.

Yet I thought there were signs in him of some perturbation. I met him one morning coming out of the room in which the portrait

hung, as if he had gone to look at it stealthily. He was shaking his head, and saying "No, no," to himself, not perceiving me, and I stepped aside when I saw him so absorbed. For myself, I entered that room but little. I went outside, as I had so often done when I was a child, and looked through the windows into the still and now sacred place, which had always impressed me with a certain awe. Looked at so, the slight figure in its white dress seemed to be stepping down into the room from some slight visionary altitude, looking with that which had seemed to me at first anxiety, which I sometimes represented to myself now as a wistful curiosity, as if she were looking for the life which might have been hers. Where was the existence that had belonged to her, the sweet household place, the infant she had left ? She would no more recognise the man who thus came to look at her as through a veil with a mystic reverence, than I could recognize her. I could never be her child to her, any more than she could be a mother to me.

Thus time passed on for several quiet days. There was nothing to make us give any special heed to the passage of time, life being very uneventful and its habits unvaried. My mind was very much preoccupied by my father's tenants. He had a great deal of property in the town which was so near us,—streets of small houses, the best-paying property (I was assured) of any. I was very anxious to come to some settled conclusion : on the one hand, not to let myself be carried away by sentiment ; on the other, not to allow my strongly roused feelings to fall into the

blank of routine, as his had done. I was seated one evening in my own sitting-room busy with this matter—busy with calculations as to cost and profit, with an anxious desire to convince him, either that his profits were greater than justice allowed, or that they carried with them a more urgent duty than he had conceived.

It was night, but not late, not more than ten o'clock, the household still astir. Everything was quiet—not the solemnity of midnight silence, in which there is always something of mystery, but the soft-breathing quiet of the

evening, full of the faint habitual sounds of a human dwelling, a consciousness of life about. And I was very busy with my figures, interested, feeling no room in my mind for any other thought. The singular experience which had startled me so much had passed over very quickly, and there had been no return. I had ceased to think of it ; indeed I had never thought of it save for the moment, setting it down after it was over to a physical cause without much difficulty. At this time I was far too busy to have thoughts to spare for anything, or room for imagination ; and when suddenly in a moment, without any warning, the first symptom returned, I started with it into determined resistance, resolute not to be fooled by any mock influence which could resolve itself into the action of nerves or ganglions. The first symptom, as before, was that my heart sprang up with a bound, as if a cannon had been fired at my ear. My whole being responded with a start. The pen fell out of my fingers, the figures went out of my head as if all faculty had departed : and yet I was conscious for a time at least of keeping my self-control. I was like the rider of a frightened horse, rendered almost wild by something which in the mystery of its voiceless being it has seen, something on the road which it will not pass, but wildly plunging, resisting every persuasion, turns from, with ever increasing passion. The rider himself after a time becomes infected with this inexplicable desperation of terror, and I suppose I must have done so : but for a time I kept the upper hand. I would not allow myself to spring up as I wished, as my impulse was, but sat there doggedly, clinging to my books, to my table, fixing myself

on I did not mind what, to resist the flood of sensation, of emotion, which was sweeping through me, carrying me away. I tried to continue my calculations. I tried to stir myself up with recollections of the miserable sights I had seen, the poverty, the helplessness. I tried to work myself into indignation ; but all through these efforts I felt the contagion growing upon me, my mind falling into sympathy with all those straining faculties of the body, startled, excited, driven wild by something I knew not what. It was not fear. I was like a ship at sea straining and plunging against wind and tide, but I was not afraid. I am obliged to use these metaphors, otherwise I could give no explanation of my condition, seized upon against my will, and torn from all those moorings of reason to which I clung with desperation—as long as I had the strength.

When I got up from my chair at last, the battle was lost, so far as my powers of self-control were concerned. I got up or rather was dragged up, from my seat, clutching at these material things round me as with a last effort to hold my own. But that was no longer possible ; I was overcome. I stood for a moment looking round me feebly, feeling myself begin to babble with stammering lips, which was the alternative of shrieking, and which I seemed to choose as a lesser evil. What I said was, "What am I to do?" and after a while, "What do you want me to do?" although throughout I saw no one, heard no voice, and had in reality not power enough in my dizzy and confused brain to know what I myself meant. I stood thus for a moment looking blankly round me for guidance, repeating the question, which seemed after a time to become almost mechanical.

What do you want me to do? though I neither knew to whom I addressed it nor why I said it. Presently—whether in answer, whether in mere yielding of nature, I cannot tell—I became aware of a difference: not a lessening of the agitation, but a softening, as if my powers of resistance being exhausted, a gentler force, a more benignant influence, had room. I felt myself consent to whatever it was. My heart melted in the midst of the tumult; I seemed to give myself up, and move as if drawn by some one whose arm was in mine, as if softly swept along, not forcibly, but with an utter consent of all my faculties to do I knew not what, for love of I knew not whom. For love—that was how it seemed—not by force, as when I went before. But my steps took the same course: I went through the dim passages in an exaltation indescribable, and opened the door of my father's room.

He was seated there at his table as usual, the light of the lamp falling on his white hair: he looked up with some surprise at the sound of the opening door. "Phil," he said, and, with a look of wondering apprehension on his face, watched my approach. I went straight up to him, and put my hand on his shoulder. "Phil, what is the matter? What do you want with me? What is it?" he said.

"Father, I can't tell you. I come not of myself. There must be something in it, though I don't know what it is. This is the second time I have been brought to you here."

"Are you going——?" he stopped himself. The exclamation had been begun with an angry intention. He stopped, looking at me with a scared look, as if perhaps it might be true.

"Do you mean mad? I don't

think so. I have no delusions that I know of. Father, think—do you know any reason why I am brought here? for some cause there must be."

I stood with my hand upon the back of his chair. His table was covered with papers, among which were several letters with the broad black border which I had before observed. I noticed this now in my excitement without any distinct associations of thoughts, for that I was not capable of; but the black border caught my eye. And I was conscious that he, too, gave a hurried glance at them, and with one hand swept them away.

"Philip," he said, pushing back his chair, "you must be ill, my poor boy. Evidently we have not been treating you rightly: you have been more ill all through than I supposed. Let me persuade you to go to bed."

"I am perfectly well," I said. "Father, don't let us deceive one another. I am neither a man to go mad nor to see ghosts. What it is that has got the command over me I can't tell; but there is some cause for it. You are doing something or planning something with which I have a right to interfere."

He turned round squarely in his chair with a spark in his blue eyes. He was not a man to be meddled with. "I have yet to learn what can give my son a right to interfere. I am in possession of all my faculties, I hope."

"Father," I cried, "won't you listen to me? no one can say I have been undutiful or disrespectful. I am a man, with a right to speak my mind, and I have done so; but this is different. I am not here by my own will. Something that is stronger than I has brought me. There is something in your mind which disturbs—others. I don't

know what I am saying. This is not what I meant to say : but you know the meaning better than I. Some one—who can speak to you only by me—speaks to you by me ; and I know that you understand.”

He gazed up at me, growing pale, and his underlip fell. I, for my part, felt that my message was delivered. My heart sank into a stillness so sudden that it made me faint. The light swam in my eyes : everything went round with me. I kept upright only by my hold upon the chair ; and in the sense of utter weakness that followed, I dropped on my knees I think first, then on the nearest seat that presented itself, and covering my face with my hands, had hard ado not to sob, in the sudden removal of that strange influence, the relaxation of the strain.

There was silence between us for some time ; then he said, but with a voice slightly broken, “ I don’t understand you, Phil. You must have taken some fancy into your mind which my slower intelligence—— Speak out what you want to say. What do you find fault with ? Is it all—all that woman Jordan ? ”

He gave a short forced laugh as he broke off, and shook me almost roughly by the shoulder, saying, “ Speak out ! what—what do you want to say ? ”

“ It seems, sir, that I have said everything.” My voice trembled more than his, but not in the same way. “ I have told you that I did not come by my own will—quite otherwise. I resisted as long as I could : now all is said. It is for you to judge whether it was worth the trouble or not.”

He got up from his seat in a hurried way. “ You would have me as—mad as yourself,” he said,

then sat down again as quickly. “ Come, Phil : if it will please you, not to make a breach, the first breach, between us, you shall have your way. I consent to your looking into that matter about the poor tenants. Your mind shall not be upset about that, even though I don’t enter into all your views.”

“ Thank you,” I said ; “ but, father, that is not what it is.”

“ Then it is a piece of folly,” he said, angrily. “ I suppose you mean—but this is a matter in which I choose to judge for myself.”

“ You know what I mean,” I said, as quietly as I could, “ though I don’t myself know ; that proves there is good reason for it. Will you do one thing for me before I leave you ? Come with me into the drawing-room——”

“ What end,” he said, with again the tremble in his voice, “ is to be served by that ? ”

“ I don’t very well know ; but to look at her, you and I together, will always do something for us, sir. As for breach, there can be no breach when we stand there.”

He got up, trembling like an old man, which he was, but which he never looked like save at moments of emotion like this, and told me to take the light ; then stopped when he had got half-way across the room. “ This is a piece of theatrical sentimentality,” he said. “ No, Phil, I will not go. I will not bring her into any such—— Put down the lamp, and if you will take my advice go to bed.”

“ At least,” I said, “ I will trouble you no more, father, to-night. So long as you understand, there need be no more to say.”

He gave me a very curt “ good-night,” and turned back to his papers—the letters with the black

edge, either by my imagination or in reality, always keeping uppermost. I went to my own room for my lamp, and then alone proceeded to the silent shrine in which the portrait hung. I at least would look at her to-night. I don't know whether I asked myself, in so many words, if it were she who—or if it was any one—I knew nothing; but my heart was drawn with a softness—born, perhaps, of the great weakness in which I was left after that visitation—to her, to look at her, to see perhaps if there was any sym-

pathy, any approval in her face. I set down my lamp on the table where her little work-basket still was; the light threw a gleam upward upon her,—she seemed more than ever to be stepping into the room, coming down towards me, coming back to her life. Ah no! her life was lost and vanished: all mine stood between her and the days she knew. She looked at me with eyes that did not change. The anxiety I had seen at first seemed now a wistful subdued question; but that difference was not in her look but in mine.

I need not linger on the intervening time. The doctor who attended us usually, came in next day “by accident,” and we had a long conversation. On the following day a very impressive yet genial gentleman from town lunched with us—a friend of my father's, Dr Something; but the introduction was hurried, and I did not catch his name. He, too, had a long talk with me afterwards—my father being called away to speak to some one on business. Dr— drew me out on the subject of the dwellings of the poor. He said he heard I took great interest in this question, which had come so much to the front at the present moment. He was interested in it too, and wanted to know the view I took. I explained at considerable length that my view did not concern the general subject, on which I had scarcely thought, so much as the individual mode of management of my father's estate. He was a most patient and intelligent listener, agreeing with me on some points, differing in others; and his visit was very pleasant. I had no idea until after of its

special object: though a certain puzzled look and slight shake of the head when my father returned, might have thrown some light upon it. The report of the medical experts in my case must, however, have been quite satisfactory, for I heard nothing more of them. It was, I think, a fortnight later when the next and last of these strange experiences came.

This time it was morning, about noon,—a wet and rather dismal spring day. The half-spread leaves seemed to tap at the window, with an appeal to be taken in; the primroses, that showed golden upon the grass at the roots of the trees, just beyond the smooth-shorn grass of the lawn, were all drooped and sodden among their sheltering leaves. The very growth seemed dreary—the sense of spring in the air making the feeling of winter a grievance, instead of the natural effect which it had conveyed a few months before. I had been writing letters, and was cheerful enough, going back among the associates of my old life, with, perhaps, a little longing for its freedom and inde-

pendence, but at the same time a not ungrateful consciousness that for the moment my present tranquillity might be best.

This was my condition—a not unpleasant one—when suddenly the now well-known symptoms of the visitation to which I had become subject suddenly seized upon me,—the leap of the heart ; the sudden, causeless, overwhelming physical excitement, which I could neither ignore nor allay. I was terrified beyond description, beyond reason, when I became conscious that this was about to begin over again : what purpose did it answer, what good was in it ? My father indeed understood the meaning of it, though I did not understand : but it was little agreeable to be thus made a helpless instrument without any will of mine, in an operation of which I knew nothing ; and to enact the part of the oracle unwillingly, with suffering and such a strain as it took me days to get over. I resisted, not as before, but yet desperately, trying with better knowledge to keep down the growing passion. I hurried to my room and swallowed a dose of a sedative which had been given me to procure sleep on my first return from India. I saw Morpheus in the hall, and called him to talk to him, and cheat myself, if possible, by that means. Morpheus lingered, however, and, before he came, I was beyond conversation. I heard him speak, his voice coming vaguely though the turmoil which was already in my ears, but what he said I have never known. I stood staring, trying to recover my power of attention, with an aspect which ended by completely frightening the man. He cried out at last that he was sure I was ill, that he must bring me something ;

which words penetrated more or less into my maddened brain. It became impressed upon me that he was going to get some one—one of my father's doctors, perhaps—to prevent me from acting, to stop my interference,—and that if I waited a moment longer I might be too late. A vague idea seized me at the same time, of taking refuge with the portrait—going to its feet, throwing myself there, perhaps, till the paroxysm should be over. But it was not there that my footsteps were directed. I can remember making an effort to open the door of the drawing-room, and feeling myself swept past it, as if by a gale of wind. It was not there that I had to go. I knew very well where I had to go,—once more on my confused and voiceless mission to my father, who understood, although I could not understand.

Yet as it was daylight, and all was clear, I could not help noting one or two circumstances on my way. I saw some one sitting in the hall as if waiting—a woman, a girl, a black-shrouded figure, with a thick veil over her face : and asked myself who she was, and what she wanted there ? This question, which had nothing to do with my present condition, somehow got into my mind, and was tossed up and down upon the tumultuous tide like a stray log on the breast of a fiercely rolling stream, now submerged, now coming uppermost, at the mercy of the waters. It did not stop me for a moment, as I hurried towards my father's room, but it got upon the current of my mind. I flung open my father's door, and closed it again after me, without seeing who was there or how he was engaged. The full clearness of the daylight did not identify him as the lamp

did at night. He looked up at the sound of the door, with a glance of apprehension ; and rising suddenly, interrupting some one who was standing speaking to him with much earnestness and even vehemence, came forward to meet me. "I cannot be disturbed at present," he said quickly ; "I am busy." Then seeing the look in my face, which by this time he knew, he too changed colour. "Phil," he said, in a low, imperative voice, "wretched boy, go away—go away ; don't let a stranger see you——"

"I can't go away," I said. "It is impossible. You know why I have come. I cannot, if I would. It is more powerful than I——"

"Go, sir," he said ; "go at once—no more of this folly. I will not have you in this room. Go—go!"

I made no answer. I don't know that I could have done so. There had never been any struggle between us before ; but I had no power to do one thing or another. The tumult within me was in full career. I heard indeed what he said, and was able to reply ; but his words, too, were like straws tossed upon the tremendous stream. I saw now with my feverish eyes who the other person present was. It was a woman, dressed also in mourning similar to the one in the hall ; but this a middle-aged woman, like a respectable servant. She had been crying, and in the pause caused by this encounter between my father and myself, dried her eyes with a handkerchief, which she rolled like a ball in her hand, evidently in strong emotion. She turned and looked at me as my father spoke to me, for a moment with a gleam of hope, then falling back into her former attitude.

My father returned to his seat.

He was much agitated too, though doing all that was possible to conceal it. My inopportune arrival was evidently a great and unlooked-for vexation to him. He gave me the only look of passionate displeasure I have ever had from him, as he sat down again ; but he said nothing more.

"You must understand," he said, addressing the woman, "that I have said my last words on this subject. I don't choose to enter into it again in the presence of my son, who is not well enough to be made a party to any discussion. I am sorry that you should have had so much trouble in vain ; but you were warned beforehand, and you have only yourself to blame. I acknowledge no claim, and nothing you can say will change my resolution. I must beg you to go away. All this is very painful and quite useless. I acknowledge no claim."

"Oh, sir," she cried, her eyes beginning once more to flow, her speech interrupted by little sobs. "Maybe I did wrong to speak of a claim. I'm not educated to argue with a gentleman. Maybe we have no claim. But if it's not by right, oh, Mr Canning, won't you let your heart be touched by pity ? She don't know what I'm saying, poor dear. She's not one to beg and pray for herself, as I'm doing for her. Oh, sir, she's so young ! She's so lone in this world—not a friend to stand by her, nor a house to take her in ! You are the nearest to her of any one that's left in this world. She hasn't a relation—not one so near as you—oh !" she cried, with a sudden thought, turning quickly round upon me, "this gentleman's your son ! Now I think of it, it's not your relation she is, but his, through his mother ! That's nearer, nearer ! Oh, sir !

you're young ; your heart should be more tender. Here is my young lady that has no one in the world to look to her. Your own flesh and blood : your mother's cousin—your mother's——”

My father called to her to stop, with a voice of thunder. “Philip, leave us at once. It is not a matter to be discussed with you.”

And then in a moment it became clear to me what it was. It had been with difficulty that I had kept myself still. My breast was labouring with the fever of an impulse poured into me, more than I could contain. And now for the first time I knew why. I hurried towards him, and took his hand, though he resisted, into mine. Mine were burning, but his like ice : their touch burnt me with its chill, like fire. “This is what it is?” I cried. “I had no knowledge before. I don't know now what is being asked of you. But, father—understand ! You know, and I know now, that some one sends me—some one—who has a right to interfere.”

He pushed me away with all his might. “You are mad,” he cried. “What right have you to think——? Oh, you are mad—mad ! I have seen it coming on——”

The woman, the petitioner, had grown silent, watching this brief conflict with the terror and interest with which women watch a struggle between men. She started and fell back when she heard what he said, but did not take her eyes off me, following every movement I made. When I turned to go away, a cry of indescribable disappointment and remonstrance burst from her, and even my father raised himself up and stared at my withdrawal, astonished to find that he had overcome me so soon and

easily. I paused for a moment, and looked back on them, seeing them large and vague through the mist of fever. “I am not going away,” I said. “I am going for another messenger—one you can't gainsay.”

My father rose. He called out to me threateningly, “I will have nothing touched that is hers. Nothing that is hers shall be profaned——”

I waited to hear no more ; I knew what I had to do. By what means it was conveyed to me I cannot tell ; but the certainty of an influence which no one thought of calmed me in the midst of my fever. I went out into the hall, where I had seen the young stranger waiting. I went up to her and touched her on the shoulder. She rose at once, with a little movement of alarm, yet with docile and instant obedience, as if she had expected the summons. I made her take off her veil and her bonnet, scarcely looking at her, scarcely seeing her, knowing how it was : I took her soft, small, cool, yet trembling hand into mine ; it was so soft and cool, not cold, it refreshed me with its tremulous touch. All through I moved and spoke like a man in a dream, swiftly, noiselessly, all the complications of waking life removed, without embarrassment, without reflection, without the loss of a moment. My father was still standing up, leaning a little forward as he had done when I withdrew, threatening, yet terror-stricken, not knowing what I might be about to do, when I returned with my companion. That was the one thing he had not thought of. He was entirely undecided, unprepared. He gave her one look, flung up his arms above his head, and uttered a distracted cry, so wild that it seemed the last outcry of nature

—“Agnes!” then fell back like a sudden ruin, upon himself, into his chair.

I had no leisure to think how he was, or whether he could hear what I said. I had my message to deliver. “Father,” I said, labouring with my panting breath, “it is for this that heaven has opened, and one whom I never saw, one whom I know not, has taken possession of me. Had we been less earthly we should have seen her—herself, and not merely her image. I have not even known what she meant. I have been as a fool without understanding. This is the third time I have come to you with her message, without knowing what to say. But now I have found it out. This is her message. I have found it out at last.”

There was an awful pause—a pause in which no one moved or breathed. Then there came a broken voice out of my father’s chair. He had not understood, though I think he heard what I said. He put out two feeble hands. “Phil—I think I am dying—has she—has she come for me?” he said.

We had to carry him to his bed. What struggles he had gone through before I cannot tell. He

had stood fast, and had refused to be moved, and now he fell—like an old tower, like an old tree. The necessity there was for thinking of him saved me from the physical consequences which had prostrated me on a former occasion. I had no leisure now for any consciousness of how matters went with myself.

His delusion was not wonderful, but most natural. She was clothed in black from head to foot, instead of the white dress of the portrait. She had no knowledge of the conflict, of nothing but that she was called for, that her fate might depend on the next few minutes. In her eyes there was a pathetic question, a line of anxiety in the lids, an innocent appeal in the looks. And the face the same: the same lips, sensitive, ready to quiver; the same innocent, candid brow; the look of a common race, which is more subtle than mere resemblance. How I knew that it was so I cannot tell, nor any man. It was the other—the elder—ah no! not elder; the ever young, the Agnes to whom age can never come—she who they say was the mother of a man who never saw her—it was she who led her kinswoman, her representative, into our hearts.

My father recovered after a few days: he had taken cold, it was said the day before—and naturally, at seventy, a small matter is enough to upset the balance even of a strong man. He got quite well; but he was willing enough afterwards to leave the management of that ticklish kind of property which involves human well-being in my hands, who could move about more freely, and see with my own eyes how things were

going on. He liked home better, and had more pleasure in his personal existence in the end of his life. Agnes is now my wife, as he had, of course, foreseen. It was not merely the disinclination to receive her father’s daughter, or to take upon him a new responsibility, that had moved him, to do him justice. But both these motives had told strongly. I have never been told, and now will never be told, what his griefs against my mother’s

family, and specially against that cousin, had been ; but that he had been very determined, deeply prejudiced, there can be no doubt. It turned out after, that the first occasion on which I had been mysteriously commissioned to him with a message which I did not understand, and which for that time he did not understand, was the evening of the day on which he had received the dead man's letter, appealing to him—to him, a man whom he had wronged—on behalf of the child who was about to be left friendless in the world. The second time, further letters, from the nurse who was the only guardian of the orphan, and the chaplain of the place where her father had died, taking it for granted that my father's house was her natural refuge—had been received. The third I have already described, and its results.

For a long time after, my mind was never without a lurking fear that the influence which had once taken possession of me might return again. Why should I have feared to be influenced—to be the messenger of a blessed creature, whose wishes could be nothing

but heavenly? Who can say? Flesh and blood is not made for such encounters : they were more than I could bear. But nothing of the kind has ever occurred again.

Agnes had her peaceful domestic throne established under the picture. My father wished it to be so, and spent his evenings there in the warmth and light, instead of in the old library, in the narrow circle cleared by our lamp out of the darkness, as long as he lived. It is supposed by strangers that the picture on the wall is that of my wife ; and I have always been glad that it should be so supposed. She who was my mother, who came back to me and became as my soul for three strange moments and no more, but with whom I can feel no credible relationship as she stands there, has retired for me into the tender regions of the unseen. She has passed once more into the secret company of those shadows, who can only become real in an atmosphere fitted to modify and harmonise all differences, and make all wonders possible—the light of the perfect day.

RECENT DEGRADATION OF MILITARY RANK.

We seem to have entered upon an era of incessant change in the organisation of the British army. One thing certainly remains constant—the diminutive strength of the regimental rank and file, although the number of officers, and especially the officers of the higher ranks, undergoes continual increase. But, with this one exception, everything connected with the army is in a state of flux. The beginning of the era of restlessness dates from the Abolition of Purchase in 1871. No one would wish to see purchase revived with its enormous inherent abuses, although, as was pointed out by more than one authority at the time, a limited kind of purchase might have been very useful. For one grave defect in the new state of things is, that the commissioned ranks of the army are being filled with penniless young men. The profession requires no capital to embark in, and no interest; is it open to every one who can gain a place at the competitive examination. The army is thus a thoroughly democratic career; the only deterrent, in fact, is the expense of the preliminary education. If that can be met, and if enough money can be scraped together by his parent to buy the youngster his red coat, then he is destined to swell the ever increasing ranks who swarm up, Chinese fashion, to the half-yearly competitions at Burlington House. In this respect truly the army has become an open profession; but coupled with this opening of it to all comers, there are the drastic new rules for clearing out the ranks at the other end, and the result is that shoals of excellent officers are turned adrift in the prime of life with a bare pittance whereon to spend the rest of their days. It would have been a very useful check on this extension of genteel pauperism, which is one of the most unfortunate concomitants of our new army system, if the condition had been attached to competition that every competitor should deposit a round sum of money, say fifteen hundred or even a couple of thousand pounds, to be held in trust for the owner, and the interest only to be claimable by him until his death or retirement from the service. There would have been no lack of competitors of quite good enough quality under this condition, which alone would have sufficed to ensure a sufficient stream of retirement, because the certainty of coming in for a round sum of money would have furnished a strong incentive to a man to retire, just as it did in the old days of purchase, while a great deal of poverty, present and prospective, would have been averted. The truth is, that so long as a sufficient number of officers of excellent quality is forthcoming to serve on the bare pittance which forms a British officer's pay in the lower ranks, there is no call to raise the pay; but that pay is quite insufficient to support an officer of even the most economical habits. This truth unfortunately is not apprehended by the friends of the candidates who are crowding into the army. The notion has got abroad that the army has now become a profession by which a man can find a livelihood, while, as we have observed, it is an easy way of providing for a son, without the expense involved in embarking him in any of the profes-

sions which require either a capital to start with, or a prolonged support until the independence is reached. Even in India it has almost ceased to be possible for the subaltern of the British regiment to live on his pay. This is partly due to the general rise of prices in that country, partly to the more expensive habit of living amongst the English middle classes, which has found its way to India, and partly also perhaps to the greater development of field sports, which is a characteristic of Indian as well as of English life, and which, oddly enough, can be distinctly traced to the extension of railways. So far, then, from being more of a profession, in the sense of its providing a permanent and respectable livelihood, the army has become even less so than it used to be. In old days, if the poor officer could not purchase promotion, he could at least hold on to his regiment for as long as he pleased; but now this fixity of tenure is exchanged for the prospect of early compulsory retirement. Notice of the change, however, came too late to avert the disaster which has already overtaken so many officers, and still awaits so many more in the future, of being cast adrift with a mere pittance in the very prime of life.

The new rules which regulate compulsory retirement are the outcome of the report of Lord Penzance's Commission of 1876, the recommendations of which were subsequently embodied in the great Royal Warrant of 1877. This Commission, as may be remembered, was appointed to consider, and report how Lord Cardwell's pledge might be redeemed, that promotion in the army, after the abolition of purchase, should be at least as rapid as it had been under the purchase system. Their recommenda-

tion was briefly to the effect that, in order to ensure this condition, it would be necessary to provide that regimental promotion should be secured by producing vacancies laterally as well as at one end in the junior as in the senior ranks, so that, as they put it, the stream of promotion should not flow only through the narrow neck of the bottle. Accordingly, limiting ages were fixed for each rank, on reaching which the officer is compulsorily retired. These ages were fixed at forty years for captains, forty-seven for majors, fifty-two for lieutenant-colonels, and fifty-five for colonels; while, in order to minimise the hardship these measures would involve, the right to pensions on optional retirement, heretofore limited to only very senior officers, was extended to all officers of twenty years' service and upwards, with lump-sum gratuities for junior officers retiring voluntarily.

The effect of these new regulations has been a tremendous clearance of senior officers and a corresponding amount of hardship. It is true that all the retirements were not compulsory: some were the result of pensions being for the first time available in the lower grades; and a good many officers have taken pensions and bonuses simply because, looking ahead, they saw that their turn would come very shortly to be put on the shelf. This, however, was merely anticipating compulsion. Practically, some of the best officers in the army have been lost to it in this way. The middle-aged captain or major is often the most valuable officer in a regiment. These men, if they have given up the ambitious expectations with which they set out, are at any rate reconciled to their lot. They have got to make a home of their regiments,

and they are liked by the men, because from long experience they are more considerate than younger officers, and carry on the duties in a pleasanter way : where the officers of a regiment are of long standing, it will generally be found that the regiment is in a good state of discipline. However, the clearance has been accomplished, and Lord Cardwell's pledge amply fulfilled, for never was promotion so fast as it has been since the introduction of this warrant. Officers have been getting their troops and companies in four and five years, without paying for them ; promotion in the Royal Artillery, to which compulsory retirement has been extended, has been speeding so fast that Woolwich can hardly supply enough officers to fill up the vacancies, and this at a time practically of profound peace as far as casualties go.

So drastic was the effect, that the authorities became alarmed at their own measures. The actuaries who were consulted, discovered that only a very small proportion of the officers of the army could under the rules escape compulsory retirement, and in order to mitigate their severity, without altering their terms verbally, it was determined to make the higher regimental ranks more easily accessible by largely increasing them. Mahomet was to come to the mountain. This plan, it may be observed, was discussed by Lord Penzance's Commission and rejected as unsuitable. More senior officers should not be created, they argued, than are actually required, merely to accelerate promotion. Nevertheless, in contravention of this sound opinion, the plan of increasing the number of senior officers has been adopted. A second lieutenant-colonel has been added to each battalion, and a

number of captains converted into majors, who, however, are still holding the command of companies. The necessary result of this change is, that in ordinary course officers will reach the rank of major and lieutenant-colonel sooner than they otherwise would have done ; and thus has been diminished to a certain extent the drastic effect of the compulsory retirement clauses. But obviously the same result could have been equally well obtained by altering the ages at which the compulsory clauses come into effect. If it were found that too many officers were hit by the rule which makes the retirement of a captain compulsory at forty and of a major at forty-seven, the natural remedy would have been to raise the limit of age for compulsory retirement, say to forty-three or forty-four in the one case, and to fifty or thereabouts in the other. The result would have been precisely the same, so far as regards the age and efficiency of officers retained in the service, and it would have been attained without that degradation of military rank which is such a melancholy feature of English military administration at the present time. Heretofore rank in the English army has represented the same status as in other armies. A captain has been a man commanding a company ; a field officer has always fulfilled higher functions than the command of a company ; a lieutenant-colonel has had at least the command of a battalion. This is now no longer the case ; and although it was hardly to be expected that the officers affected will cry out against a change by which they have gained so largely in pocket, as well as in other ways, nevertheless the general feeling in the army, even among those who have benefited by the change, is that this degra-

dation of rank has been a great mistake.

The immediate effect of the Warrant of 1877 was thus a great rush of promotion. But this rush must inevitably be followed by a period of stagnation. When officers have no incentive to retire, they will hold on until their turn comes to be compulsorily retired, and we may expect that the flow of promotion in the future will be regulated solely by the action of the compulsory retirement rules. But the seniors in each grade are now so comparatively young, that their turn to be placed on the shelf is still far off. Thus the unduly rapid promotion of the present is laying up a store of bad promotion for the young officers now entering the army. The authorities at the War Office, however, have at last discovered that promotion is going too fast, and, alarmed at the increased burden thrown on the pension list, are now putting on the drag. An officer is not to be allowed to retire on a pension or gratuity unless the juniors who get the step have completed a certain amount of service. It is a great pity that this condition was not applied sooner. Or, had the rule originally been to offer optional retirements at the present rates to those who liked to take them, while leaving out the obligatory clauses for compulsory retirement at certain ages in certain grades, promotion would have been quite fast enough, and a great deal of hardship would have been avoided, as well as the inevitable block impending in the future. The great object of the regulations should be to ensure an equable flow of promotion, and not promotion by fits and starts.

The regulations governing the command of regiments have also undergone fluctuations. First, the

tenure of a lieutenant-colonel was limited to five years, as proposed by Lord Penzance's Commission, and if there is to be a fixed limit, this term appears suitable. But then, when a second lieutenant-colonel was added to each battalion in 1881, the result followed that either the junior might never succeed on the command at all, or, if he was to have a full term of command, that ten years might be spent in passing through that grade. It was accordingly ruled that the tenure of the rank of lieutenant-colonel should be limited to six years, and that the time passed in command should not exceed four, the result being that a lieutenant-colonel might possibly get only a two years' slice of the command. It appears very questionable whether all or any of these complicated conditions for governing promotion in the different ranks are necessary. It is certainly desirable to have a maximum limit of age in the higher ranks, but should not that condition suffice for all the requirements of the case? In the French army there is one fixed rule: no officer can remain on the effective list after the age of sixty-two, and certainly no general officer ought to be older than this. We, on the other hand, have a sliding scale; the higher the rank the older the man may be. A lieutenant-general may hold on till sixty-seven; a major-general must not exceed sixty-two, nor a colonel fifty-five. But if there is to be any difference in the limit of age for the different ranks, the arrangement should be reversed, because the higher the rank, the more necessary is the possession of vigour and activity by the officer. The demand on the vigour and endurance of a general officer in the field is far greater than that made on the battalion commander.

An old man does well enough in the latter capacity if he can sit his horse and keep up with his men on foot ; and soldiers on the whole like being commanded by old officers. But the general should be the most active man in the force, fresh and unwearied at the critical moment ; at the end of the long day when success may crown the last effort, fit to go on himself, and to urge his troops on when all others are fatigued and seeking rest. Even in the ordinary work of a campaign the general has much more ground to cover in the day's work than those under him, and much more business to get through. To take one instance only. The reader of 'Personal Reminiscences of Wellington's Campaign' will have understood what a large factor in Wellington's success was his extraordinary personal vigour and power of endurance, his faculty of being everywhere where he was wanted, and seeing everything for himself. So with other great commanders : it may be safely asserted that, save in quite exceptional circumstances, no army commanded by a general not in the full vigour of life will achieve any great results, and few men are this after sixty. It may be objected that the experience of the German army in the Franco-Prussian war is opposed to this assertion, because the German generals who did such great things were most of them old men. But that case was peculiar, although even there the leaders of the two chief armies were men in the prime of life. When such very large bodies of men are in the field as were engaged on that occasion, the movements must necessarily be of a more or less leisurely kind, and the leader must perforce see through the eyes of others. Further, it must be observed that, masterly although

the strategy was in that war, there was a very sensible want of vigour displayed on more than one occasion in pressing advantages, notably after the battle of Worth, where the Germans allowed the beaten French army to get clear away from them. But it is not given to our generals to command a hundred thousand men in the field. The work they have to do is usually of a very different kind. To command a small expeditionary force of four or five thousand men, thrown into a strange country, perhaps a savage and unhealthy one, and where a high degree of physical endurance is required for proper leading, is what usually falls to the British general ; and other things being the same, the younger he is the better he will do the job. The great Duke said, at the end of his campaigns, that he was beginning to "go off" when he was only forty-five ; few are the men who do not decline in vigour after they are fifty. If efficiency be the main object, therefore, the rule of age should be as strict for the generals as for the colonels. However, this is a new doctrine which will hardly find acceptance all at once, but at any rate one rule for age might apply to all other ranks. At present, out of consideration for the existing colonels, the limit of age for that rank has been temporarily extended to fifty-nine years, but hereafter is to be reduced to fifty-five ; and provided that limit be maintained, all other conditions, such as the obligatory retirement of captains at forty, majors at forty-seven, and lieutenant-colonels at fifty-two, which press very hardly upon individual officers, seem to be unnecessary. If nobody in the army, except the generals, is over fifty-five, there is no fear of the army being too old for its work. The reason alleged for these com-

plicated conditions is the one already cited, that vacancies ought to take place laterally as well as at one end of the list. And it might be objected that if compulsory retirement were insisted on in the grade of colonel only, the result would be that every officer would succeed in turn to the command of a regiment, and hold it for only a few months before his turn came to be shelved. And very frequent changes of regimental commanders would, of course, be bad. But it is doubtful if such a result would follow. As the rules now stand, indeed, each officer feels assured that if he can escape compulsory retirement, his turn will come to rise to the top of the regiment, and so is tempted to hold on; whereas if he saw that there was little chance of the way being cleared for him, he would retire of his own accord. This is what used to happen in the old days, when a lieutenant-colonel would sometimes remain ten or fifteen years in command of a regiment. The officers below him saw that he had no intention of making way for them, and therefore they gave up waiting, and went themselves: if they had known that he had only a short tenure of office, they might have been tempted to hold on. Few men indeed would care to take up the command of a regiment unless they saw their way for holding it for a reasonable time. And generally it may be said that if the age for compulsory retirement be extended, the fewer will there be to whom the rule is applied. Many a man will retire of his own accord at fifty, to whom it would have been a great hardship to place him on the shelf at forty. Lastly, there remains the effectual remedy of promotion by selection, now so sparingly applied.

We have already remarked upon the degradation of military rank which has taken place in the multiplication of field officers in a regiment. A German regiment of three battalions, which in peace time is 1800 and in war time 3000 strong, has an establishment of five field officers; a French regiment of four battalions and a depot has seven field officers. For a battalion of English infantry, which in peace time is usually as low as 500 strong and in war time is not to exceed 1000, if ever it can be got up to that strength, an establishment is provided of six field officers. A cavalry regiment consisting of four, and in India of only three weak squadrons, is supplied with a staff of five field officers. The second lieutenant-colonel in all these cases has nothing to do; in fact he is kept up simply to justify the War Office and the retirement regulations. The majors in the infantry command companies, and in the cavalry troops; in every other army the much stronger company or squadron is commanded by a captain. Thus military rank in the English army has come to represent something quite different from what it represents in every other army, and has of course become cheapened in foreign estimation as well as at home; in short, a distinct degradation has been brought about of military rank. It may be said that the new double-company column of attack will furnish an adequate command for the major. But the British double company is a smaller body than the German or French single company; and the British squadron of two troops has always up to the present time been commanded by the senior of the two troop captains.

Another melancholy instance of the misuse of what should be the

cheap defence of nations is afforded by the new mode of handling the rank of colonel. In our army the command of a regiment—or a battalion, if there be more than one to a regiment—has always been held by a lieutenant-colonel, not, as in other armies, by a colonel. This peculiarity has arisen out of the circumstance that the regiment was originally raised by a colonel whose association with it was mainly pecuniary, and who did not accompany it into quarters or the field. Eventually, colonels of regiments came to be all general officers; but the title of lieutenant-colonel was still maintained for the actual commandant, and promotion to the rank of colonel was made by brevet at irregular intervals: usually the Sovereign's birthday or some other special occasion was taken to issue a general "brevet," when a batch of the senior lieutenant-colonels of the army would be advanced to the rank of colonel by brevet. The list of general officers was maintained in the same way at a varying strength by the "brevet" promotion of batches of senior colonels, and moving up the seniors of the different grades of general officer. Thus a lieutenant-colonel would pass an uncertain time in that rank, which might vary from twelve or fifteen years to seven or eight years, according as he might happen to come in at the top of one brevet or the bottom of the next. The brevet-colonel continued to be eligible to command his regiment until promoted to major-general by a succeeding brevet.

She result of the brevet system was that an officer on promotion to lieutenant-colonel could never again be superseded in the army, except by the selection of a junior lieutenant-colonel to be aide-de-camp to the Queen, so that all

inequalities in promotion up to that rank remained hereafter unadjusted throughout the career of the officers concerned. The brevets were so regulated that the higher ranks were less numerous than the lower: there were many more lieutenant-colonels than colonels, and more colonels again than general officers in any grade. This system of promotion by batches at uncertain periods was abolished in 1854, when a fixed establishment of general officers was created, promotion to which and throughout the different grades of which was henceforward determined by the occurrence of vacancies therein. This was a decided improvement, although the mistake was made of fixing the establishment at a strength far in excess of the wants of the army. It is true that, there being no limit of age for general officers, the majority were past work, so that the list was practically in the main a retired list, and the rank continued to be to a great extent a mere ornamental one; but even of the effective general officers, all could not possibly find employment. Simultaneously with this change, periodical brevets were discontinued for promotion to the rank of colonel, which was henceforward to be given after a certain number of years' actual service on duty in the rank of lieutenant-colonel. It was further provided that an officer might be promoted to the rank of brevet-colonel for distinguished service in the field. This provision was an excellent one, because it should be an object of military administration to promote the most deserving officers, and secure their early advancement to the rank of general officer. Unfortunately it has been too sparingly exercised to have much effect upon the lists of the upper ranks of the army.

The qualifying service for promotion of lieutenant-colonel to colonel, which was first fixed at five years, with strict limitation to officers holding substantive military appointments, has since been reduced to four years, while the limitations have been so extended as practically to include everybody. The result is that the number of colonels is already much in excess of the number of lieutenant-colonels in the army,—a reversal of the natural and proper order of things. The value of a rank so quickly reached is cheapened, while its utility as a means of reward is also lessened: the chances will be that the lieutenant-colonel whom it is desired to reward for distinguished services is already a brevet colonel, or that at most the special brevet will anticipate his regular promotion by only a few months. If the term of qualifying service were extended from four to six or seven years, or even longer, promotion to brevet colonel for distinguished service would be more often possible, and a much more substantial benefit to the officer, while furthering also the object which is surely to be aimed at in any system of promotion, of bringing the best officers to the top.

Another grave objection to the present rules which govern promotion to the rank of colonel, is the inordinate advantage which they give to those officers who get brevet promotion to lieutenant-colonel. This is now bestowed for the most trifling service, as if it were a mere titular distinction of little value; but since brevet rank qualifies in most cases as much as substantive, the result is that a major who gets his step for, perhaps, being present, or nearly present, in some trifling skirmish, thereupon supersedes all the other majors in the army, not only in

the rank of lieutenant-colonel, but also in the rank of colonel, and subsequently in promotion to general officers. This enormous advantage does not attach to the brevet rank of major. A captain breveted as major gets no further advancement. His next step, if it is to be a brevet one, must be earned by fresh service; and the same rule ought to be established in regard to brevet lieutenant-colonels. The undue advantages which attach to what is nowadays a very cheaply earned honour has become a real abuse.

But in fact the whole system of "lieutenant-colonels and brevet-colonels" is perfectly obsolete and out of harmony with the actual conditions of the army as now organised. Except in the Artillery and Engineers, in which services the rank is a moribund one, soon to come to an end, there is now no such thing as a substantive colonel in the army: every colonel is a brevet colonel. The actual term "brevet" has indeed been abolished; the promotion is now made, not to "brevet" colonel, but to colonel "in the army": but virtually the practice still obtains—the rank is not recognised as a regimental one. This curious condition is, in fact, a survival from the old times, when, as we have explained, every regiment had a colonel who nominally commanded it, the actual command being exercised by his deputy, the lieutenant-colonel; and the rank of colonel was reached at uncertain periods, and by batches of officers at a time, under special "brevets." But all this having been abolished, and now that the promotion is made at fixed periods of service, why should that promotion be still termed "brevet" or "army" promotion? What is the peculiar virtue in the term as applied to the colonel! Now that there are no other colonels in the

army to distinguish from them, why should the rank of colonel be brevet or army rank only, any more than the rank of lieutenant-colonel, major, or captain?

All sorts of anomalies arise out of the maintenance of this term. Thus, for example, under existing rules every lieutenant-colonel of artillery or engineers is placed on half-pay after five years' service in that rank. He is, however, still eligible for a further term of employ; and being already an "army" colonel, his designation while so employed is that of a "lieutenant-colonel, half-pay, and colonel." So also with regard to the commandant of a brigade depot, or, as it is now called, a regimental district. He is also taken from the list of half-pay colonels who have completed their term of regimental service, and is styled—not colonel commanding the district, but a "lieutenant-colonel commanding and brevet-colonel." Why should an officer by a needless fiction be deemed to be on half-pay when he is on full employment and virtually on full pay, his rate of nominal half-pay being supplemented by additional allowances? And since the rank of regimental colonel, confined now only to the Artillery and Engineers, will soon be a thing of the past, why retain the rank of brevet colonel at all? A man is called a brevet major to distinguish him from a regimental major, but there are no other colonels from which the brevet or army colonels are to be distinguished: the rank is reached under fixed rules, and the appointments which are held by colonels cannot be held by officers of junior rank, so that the rank is not accidental to the position.

It seems clear, then, that the idea involved in the term "brevet," as

well as the term itself, for promotions made according to fixed rules should now be altogether abandoned: the promotion of lieutenant-colonel under those rules should be to the rank of colonel simply. But coupled with this change, there should be a great reduction in the present excessive number of colonels. In every other army the number of officers in each grade proceeds in a diminishing ratio, more than that of the next higher rank, and less than that of the next lower. This used to be the case with us too, and a reversion to the rule would be a very healthy change. There should be a fixed establishment of colonels, as of generals, to which officers should be advanced by army seniority, and also, what would be a very valuable condition, by selection. Or, still better, the rank of colonel should be attached to a definite position, which would naturally be the command of the regimental district. Thus the rank of colonel would go with the command of more than one battalion, while, as in other armies, the highest rank of an officer commanding a single battalion would be that of lieutenant-colonel. The charge of the regimental district or brigade depot, including the associated militia and volunteer battalions, would be a very suitable one for a colonel to hold; and this arrangement would be one step more towards the desired object of bringing the militia, volunteer, and line battalions into connection with each other. All battalions would be commanded by lieutenant-colonels only, who would, however, continue to be eligible for brevet promotion for distinguished service. A brevet colonelcy for distinguished service would then become, what it has now ceased to be, a real and valuable distinction.

We have already explained that the old plan of a fluctuating establishment of generals was replaced in 1854 by a fixed establishment. In 1877, in pursuance of the recommendations of Lord Penzance's Commission, all general officers were retired on attaining the age of seventy—the fixed establishment of generals, which was then considerably reduced, thus becoming much more of an effective list. The establishment was still further reduced by the Royal Warrant of June 1881, which brought it down to reasonable dimensions and some sort of relation to the actual wants of the army, while at the same time the age for retirement was fixed at sixty-two for major-generals, and sixty-seven for the two senior grades. The reduction of strength might with advantage be carried still further. There appears no reason why the establishment of generals should be in excess of the number of commands to be filled by them, any more than that there should be an excess of captains or any other rank beyond the requirements of the service. It may be objected that the establishment is not actually in excess, because many of those on the active list are not really fit for active command, either from infirmity or want of previous training. This, however, is simply to say that the system is not properly worked. Even if the characters of all officers were not perfectly well known to the army, as they might be to the authorities who have to deal with the selection of colonels for promotion, the confidential reports upon officers would afford, if they are properly made, a perfect means of regulating promotion to important rank in the army. These reports are now prepared with a degree of detail which the public generally have little notion of. It

is true that in many cases they are filled up in a perfunctory way, but this is just because so little use is made of them. If inspecting officers knew that their confidential reports would be decisive in regulating the promotions of the officers reported on, they would take more care in the preparation of them; but as a matter of fact these reports at present go for very little. Officers who are notoriously incompetent for the command of a battalion, from infirmities of temper or physical or mental unfitness, are nevertheless, when their turn comes, promoted just like everybody else; and although a show of selection has lately been introduced as to filling up vacancies in these appointments, as well as in the list of major-generals, the thing is not carried nearly far enough: whenever an exception is made, it creates so much excitement as to show how seldom the rule of seniority is departed from. There should be no difficulty in securing that none but competent officers shall be promoted to the establishment of generals; and more frequent resort to selection would undoubtedly commend itself to the army, as it would to the public. An officer should not rise to general as a matter of course: unless thoroughly competent, he should not get beyond the rank of colonel. And if in this way the list were made a really effective one, then promotion to major-general should be made, not to a fixed establishment which bears no particular relation to the number of commands to be filled, but to a vacant brigade or equivalent appointment, just as the promotion of any junior officer is made. The establishment of major-generals would then consist of just so many as there are holding commands or who have completed their term of office; these latter, if re-

ing unemployed, and not being promoted to a lieutenant-general's rank and command within a certain time, to be retired in due course ; so with regard to the superior ranks.

Still the reduction of the establishment of generals made in 1881 a valuable reform as far as it goes ; but the benefit of it has been in great measure nullified by the addition, side by side with the effective list, of an enormous establishment of non-effective generals. Including all classes in the British and Indian armies together,—effectives, retired, and those holding honorary rank,—there are about seven hundred persons of sorts who bear the title of "general."

A curious state of things, which, in spite of modern growth, is open to grave objection. The public does not distinguish between the different classes,—between the effective and the non-effective lists, between the real and the so-called honorary rank ; the apparent state of things at which we have an army in which the strength of the highest ranks is ridiculously out of proportion to the rest of the force—more than enough, indeed, to command all the armies of Europe. That a general officer on retirement should take his rank with him is of course necessary ; but the distinction which should attach to that rank is entirely destroyed by its profuse award on all retired colonels.

This practice of giving honorary promotions on retirement, which is applied to all ranks as well as to colonels, was first introduced in 1854, when retirement was made honorary, in order to encourage retirements, and so stimulate the desire of promotion. The necessity has passed away, now that retirement has been made obligatory under fixed rules ; and even if it were not so, the mischievous prac-

tice should be discontinued. Military rank in the British army is degraded by being made so cheap ; the rank of general officer is so profusely bestowed that it ceases to be worth bearing. Surely the aim and object to be kept in view in regard to military titles should be, instead of cheapening them, to elevate them and make them difficult of attainment. What every one can get no one cares for. We have only to compare the estimation in which the rank of general officer is held in the German or French army with that which it holds with us, to see to what a point this degradation has been carried. There was a time when we used to laugh at the Americans and their cheap military titles, but the laugh is now the other way. In no country has military rank been so degraded as it has been in England during the last few years.

Honorary promotion on retirement is equally objectionable in the lower grades. And what does this honorary rank mean ? The officer no longer belongs to the army,—he can exercise no command : it means simply that a man is to be called something different from what he is. The man who served as a captain or major, on retirement is styled what he never was before. The practice is peculiarly objectionable in its application to the Indian army, because in that army a very large number of officers are employed on purely civil duties. It is bad enough that this should be the case with lieutenant-colonels and majors, but since practically no officer in the Indian army retires before he is obliged to do so, which is not until he becomes a colonel, the retired Indian officer is usually an honorary major-general ; and the country is swamped with a number of general officers from India, many of

whom have never so much as even commanded a company. The thing has reached such a pass that instances occur of officers applying not to get the step of honorary rank on retirement; and it must be apparent to every one that in the present day the rank of major-general is held in little more estimation than the rank of colonel.

This baneful practice was borrowed from that already obtaining in the Navy; but that does not make it the less objectionable. Moreover, the Navy is comparatively such a small service, that the evil does not make itself very apparent. The country is not so overrun with sham admirals as it is with sham generals, because there are so few of them.

Honorary promotion on retirement should, therefore, be at once abolished: the change would give great satisfaction to the army, and would commend itself to every sensible person.

It need hardly be said, after this, that the practice, so profusely extended of late years, of giving combatant rank to non-combatant officers, should also be abolished. Why should a paymaster be called a major instead of a paymaster? It may be pleaded that this renders the Pay Department more popular. If that argument be worth anything, and military titles are to be used to cheapen civil employments, then for economy's sake military titles ought to be given to the War Office clerks, and the senior clerks at the Admiralty might be dubbed post-captains, their pay being docked all round *per contra*.

We have explained that many of the recent changes are the result, directly or indirectly, of the report of Lord Penzance's Commission. One important recommendation made by it has, however, been entirely set aside. The Commission said—

"It has been stated to us as nearly the universal opinion of those whose evidence we have taken, that of late years promotion by brevet for distinguished service has been much too lavishly bestowed. At the same time it is at present almost the only way of rewarding zeal and efficiency on active service. . . . We are not prepared, therefore, to recommend that the practice of brevet promotion for distinguished service should be discontinued, but rather that it should be much more sparingly applied, and under some well-defined rules and conditions, which should be uniformly adhered to, and should practically restrict the number so promoted."

This was written in 1876: since then the bestowal of brevets and decorations has been such as to make what the Commission termed lavishness appear like parsimony, so profusely have they been showered down for the petty wars and skirmishes in which the army has taken part during the past eight years. The honours for Afghanistan were overdone; but the abuse culminated in the Egyptian business of 1882, when men who had been exposed to no hardship, and had scarcely been under fire, came away with four decorations, including the one which we had the ineffable meanness to take from the Khedive for beating his own troops.

THE WATERS OF HERCULES—PART VI.

CHAPTER XX.—THE HOME OF HER ANCESTORS.

"All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close matted, bur, and brake, and brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen
High up the topmost palace spire."

—TENNYSON.

It was a country of roses down there—a rose-world. Enchanting designation! Pregnant with sweetest perfume, redolent of softest poetry. What life can be more fraught with dreamy delight, more removed from the dry prose of common existence, than that of a rose, living amongst other roses, in the midst of a rose country? What young disciple of the Muse would not sing to himself in an ecstatic moment that he'd "be a rosebud born in a bower," and recognise the advantage of dying when the summer is o'er? The duties of a rose are light duties as a rule. To be fanned by the breeze in the daylight hours, and to listen to the song of the nightingale in the dark; to hang on a well-trimmed bush, the pride of a Northern garden; to be worshipped by well-paid gardeners, in palaces of crystal, built up for them alone; to be stared at as the triumph of a metropolitan flower show; perhaps to climb up a cottage-door and peep in at a scene of domestic felicity within; or, best of all, to crown a beauty's head, or scatter its dying petals on her breast.

Up there in the North the roses are the masters, but here in the South they are the slaves; and, like all slaves, whether human, animal, vegetable, or mineral, the roses have a hard time of it here. No young poet, be he ever so young and ever so enthusiastic, would care to be boiled up with sugar and made into jam, nor yet to

be kneaded into the sickly *dulcezza* with which the Turkish ladies delight in spoiling their teeth and ruining their digestion; nor even would he pine after the happiness of being distilled into scent, or left to dry in the sun, until he had attained the necessary degree of hardness and the coal-black hue which is requisite for the composition of that perfumed mass, out of which the Southerners are fond of carving such fragrant, but, alas! such hideous ornaments.

These slaves, with their pink faces and their hanging heads, are not cared for because of their beauty,—nobody takes the trouble to think of whether they are beautiful or not: their master looks at them with a critical eye, but it is not to mark their tenderness of hue or grace of shape,—it is to calculate how much profit they can be made to yield; for here these queens of the flower world have sunk to the prosaic position of potatoes or beet-root. The rose-harvest is talked of here, as elsewhere the wheat-harvest; and to hundreds of families the success or the failure of the flowers means riches or poverty. They are cut, they are stacked, they are carried away, just as we cut, stack and carry away our hay and our straw, our barley and our oats.

If now and then it happens that these pink-faced slaves lose their master, or that their master slackens his hold upon them, then the slaves, breaking out of all bounds, run

wild and smother the earth, growing like weeds out of its fertile surface. Then, missing the check of authority, they grow wanton, embracing and strangling each other at will. Here and there, where some such colony has escaped from mastership, the bushes bud and fade again without making any one the richer—as for instance on that lonely spot, where the roses year after year for a long time past have dropped their petals unheeded upon each other, having no other duty to fulfil than to put out their flowers as every June comes round, and weave a fantastic garland around an old man's grave.

But those escaped slaves are few. These acres of roses around are all under the yoke; and they are having their hardest time now, for it is late in the rose season, and the cutters are at work. They are to be seen in the fields using their knives mercilessly, and they are to be met on the road, coming along in the dust, bending under the load of flowers which heap the basket-casks on their backs, and staring sideways and open-mouthed at the unusual sight of a travelling-carriage jogging slowly along. There is such a profusion of roses this year, that no one cares if the heap shakes with each step, now and then dropping a rose head in the dust, from where the children pick them up and play with them gleefully.

A rose burden is not necessarily a light burden, thinks Gretchen, as she watches the toil-worn faces of the laden peasant-women; and though it may perhaps be pleasanter to prick one's fingers with rose-thorns than with needles that does not make the scratches in their hands less unsightly.

It is a hot day, but a day without sunshine. The hard glare of light, the dazzling brightness of

blue sky, which Gretchen has been used to for many days past, is gone to-day. There is an even greyness over the low hanging sky, stretching away, unbroken and unshaded, until over there in the far west, where thunder broods in the lead-blue, metal-hued clouds, and grumbles out a faint but sullen warning, with long intervals of dead silence between. There is no breeze to carry about the scent of roses on the air: it hangs heavily over the fields, intense but unrefreshing, weighing on the senses and mingling with the breath of every evil-smelling thing, which disfigures the street of each squalid village the travellers have passed. It is strange to find one's self thus freed again from the imprisonment of the Djernis valley. The wide sky looks foreign to Gretchen, and the flat country has an uncongenial vacancy after those rocks and forests they have left behind them. They had passed by many rows of hovels, called villages; and they had passed one or two solitary buildings, standing in the middle of flat fields, and scarcely shaded by acacia-trees, and these were called country-houses. They were all long and low, and each had an appanage of small out-buildings; some of them were better and some of them worse. Some of them bore the stamp of poverty upon their doors and windows and the rude planking which fenced them in, others betrayed signs of rude opulence in their open granaries overflowing with Indian corn.

"Wait till you see Draskócs!" said Ascelinde, with suppressed triumph in her tone, each time that they passed one of these solitary white houses. Not one of them even distantly approached the picture in Ascelinde's mind: they all were pale and shadowy beside the vision which, with every moment and with every yard of

the road traversed, was growing more distinct in her memory. The number of horses capable of being stabled at Draskócs had undergone a considerable increase since they started on their journey; every hour added a step to the flight which led up to the entrance door, the avenue grew more stately, the trees loftier with each minute, until it really appeared that if the journey were prolonged for another half-day, the house of Ascelinde's ancestors would threaten to tower into the sky, and strike the beholders blind with the excess of its glory.

It was two in the afternoon when they drove past the dark wooden church with its weed-grown burying-ground, and then up the dirty street of Hadháza, which Vincenz knew from his former visit. They stopped in front of the wretched little inn to water the panting horses: the poor beasts' ragged flanks were heaving, though they had jogged so slowly, for the air was heavy as lead and hot as a furnace blast.

"How slow they are in attending," said Ascelinde impatiently, as a man leisurely filled a wooden pail with the dull water of the well. "Tell them that we are going to Draskócs, Dr Komers, and that I am mistress of the place."

Dr Komers appeared not to have heard; at least he certainly did not give the information indicated, seeing which, Ascelinde gave the information herself, but was only met by a stupid stare.

"What is that man saying, Dr Komers—I can't hear him?"

"He is saying that there will be a storm before evening, and that we had better stay here."

"How ridiculous! We shall sleep at Draskócs, of course; tell the coachman to drive on."

The landlord turned back to his

inn, scratching his head, and Vincenz took his place on the box again beside the driver. The driver looked at the sky and shrugged his shoulders.

"Drive on," said Vincenz shortly; and he folded his arms and sat staring straight in front of him, with a face as expressionless and as hard-set as a face of wood. He had worn this look throughout all the journey; and throughout all the journey, too, his lips had remained so obstinately locked that it was almost with an effort that he unclosed them when some unavoidable word had to be pronounced.

When the last house of Hadháza was left behind, the road, thick with white dust and seamed with deep cart-ruts, ran along between level fields and stretches of waste land. It was the last stage of their journey, and Ascelinde, as she scanned the wide horizon, felt the solemnity of the impending moment settling down upon her soul.

"Are we near yet?" she asked at short intervals, and after a weary hour at last came the answer—"We are not far now."

The sky during this time had grown stealthily darker, and the clouds had gathered into a huddled mass. There was no one in the fields, and there was no one along the length of the deserted road.

But Ascelinde could not see the road, however much she might crane her neck. With trembling fingers she smoothed her crape bonnet-strings, and shook out the folds of her mournful tunic, which wept its inferior quality of tears around her ample person. She began to rehearse some speeches suitable for the occasion,—a noble and dignified address wherewith to answer the welcome she expected. Some very unpronounced visions of enthu-

siastic tenantry were hovering through her brain. Mr Howard had only the other day given her an account of a grand reception of the sort, when the farmers had taken out the horses and dragged their landlord to his door. The excitement was almost too great to be borne, and Ascelinde in this supreme moment, the culminating point as it were of her life, put out her hand mechanically and pressed her daughter's fingers with convulsive force.

Some acacia-trees were passed—five on one side, and six on the other; the carriage jolted heavily into a rut and heavily out of it again. Ascelinde saw the driver pointing his whip, as if at something ahead of them. That must be Draskócs—that must be *It!* Ascelinde could stand this no longer: she wrenched her hand away from her daughter, and she put it over her face.

She had scarcely done so when the carriage stood still. She looked up with a start. Dr Komers was slowly descending from his seat, and Gretchen, leaning over the side, was staring eagerly on in front.

Oh, irony of Fate! Had a horse come down, or had a wheel given way just as they were so near reaching the wished-for goal? Were they to be kept here in the middle of this cart-track when they had all but arrived at Draskócs? Must they be detained here, at its very gates?

Ascelinde stood up in the carriage in an agony of impatience. There was a long, low, tumble-down house—a lower edition of the sort they had passed at intervals in the forenoon—staring at them over a wall of rotten planks.

“Dr Komers, what has happened?” cried Ascelinde, trembling with agitation. “Why are we

being stopped here? Are we going to be robbed?—or are the horses lame?”

Dr Komers having carefully descended to the ground, adjusted his spectacles and said, in a rather diffident tone,—

“Nothing has happened.”

“Can't you take the stones out of the horses' feet, or whatever it is?” exhorted the Countess. “Be quick, I implore you!”

“There are no stones in the horses' feet, Madame Mohr.”

“Then the man is drunk, I am certain of it; you must take the reins.”

By this time Vincenz was rubbing his spectacles hard. “I assure you the man is perfectly sober,” he said, hesitating.

“Then what have we stopped here for?” demanded the big woman, with a tragedy stare, as she stood to her full height in the carriage.

The driver was quietly filling his pipe, with the reins flung over his arm, while the horses stood with lowered heads and a dejected droop of the shoulders.

Gretchen sat still, leaning over the side, looking with a sort of fascination at the crumbling house which stood behind the rotten planks. The planks seemed to run all round in a square, and they covered half the height of the house, so that only the roof and a narrow strip of the wall remained visible. Through a chink between two boards a pink rose had pushed its inquisitive head, and nodded them a hospitable welcome. To the right and to the left, to the back and to the front, the waste land stretched; the cart-track ran on, its dust lying undisturbed by any passer-by. There was no human being in sight, and no other house within eye-range, except where, in the far distance, a group of acacias

seemed to denote a repetition of the place before which they found themselves.

"Madame Mohr," said Vincenz, standing with his hand on the carriage-door, "I beg you to compose yourself. Be so kind as to look at those trees along the road; do they not recall anything to your memory!"

His grave tone arrested the excited words on her lips. She turned and stared back at the eleven acacia-trees which they had passed, six on one side, five on the other.

"There were acacia-trees at Draskócs," she said, looking at them blankly; "but there were a great many more of them, and much higher—a whole avenue."

"And that pond?" said Vincenz, pointing to an oblong piece of water which lay in a hollow outside the wall of planks, its stagnant surface coated thickly with green duckweed, a splendid feast for a waddling flock, but spreading its luscious verdure in superfluous abundance before the solitary inhabitant of the pond. Where the supply so far exceeds the demand, even such delicacies as duckweed are lowered in the estimation of a duck.

"That pond," repeated Ascelinde, obeying Dr Komers without knowing why she did it—"that pond? There was a lake at Draskócs—but the shape was rather like this pond, and there used to be swans upon it,—large white swans," she added, looking at the small and very dingy duck that had paddled back to the near-side again, and now stopped to gobble another mouthful of the floating green water-weed.

"And now," said Dr Komers, scanning Madame Mohr's face with some agitation on his own—"and now, will you look at the

house a little more carefully; does it remind you of nothing?"

Ascelinde, with a sort of notion that Dr Komers was mad and must be humoured, but with, nevertheless, a faint uneasiness at the bottom of her heart, turned away from the duck-pond and stared at the tumble-down house.

There was a pause of nearly a minute while Ascelinde gazed at the house, while Gretchen looked curiously at the lawyer's face, while the coachman stuffed his pipe with his thumb, and while the dingy duck took two journeys backwards and forwards without any need of hurry. Then Ascelinde looked at Vincenz, and he saw that the uneasiness had risen up steadily, and was now shining out of her eyes.

"I don't understand you," she faltered; "this does—does—not remind me of—of Draskócs."

"Look again," he said.

She did look again, blankly at first; but the uneasiness in her eyes turned gradually into real terror. Long, long forgotten memories had begun to whisper, and were whispering louder every minute. The house was *not* strange to her; it had some place far back in her mind. She felt herself growing cold, but she was a strong woman—she would not give in to this absurdity.

"Dr Komers, why are you keeping us here?" she asked, with an anger which was not quite real. "Why don't you tell the man to drive on to Draskócs?"

"We are at Draskócs already."

Ascelinde turned pale, but she smiled a sickly smile. This was evidently a horrible dream, and it could only need a resolute effort to awake out of it: she had to clear her throat three times before she could speak distinctly.

"Yes, Draskócs," she said, look-

ing at the lawyer rather wildly—how strange the familiar word sounded at this moment! “I suppose this is the lodge—or—the gardener’s house;—but where is the house itself?”

“There is no other house; this is the house itself.”

“This is Draskócs?” pointing with a desperate gesture across the plank wall. Oh, if only she could have clung to the belief that Dr Komers was deceiving her! But, alas! what was this new light streaming in upon her reluctant eyes? As she put the question, she looked around once more, and from everywhere around her the ghosts of far-away memories seemed to start up and stare her in the face. Those acacia-trees,—they bore a horrible resemblance to the lofty avenue she remembered; that pond, it was growing every moment more distinctly like the lake of other days; that plank-enclosure carried back her thoughts with most provoking persistency to the park-wall she had vaunted: even the tumble-down house had a ghostly, grinning likeness to the home of her earliest childhood. It was all a parody, a badly-drawn caricature; but the likeness which it bore to her memories was coming out now with rapid strokes.

“Yes, this is Draskócs.” Dr Komers said it with an effort; and having pronounced the fatal words, he turned without waiting to see the effect, and walked across the road, two or three steps away from the carriage.

This was the supreme moment then, the most dreadful half-minute which Ascelinde had ever lived through; this was the moment to which Vincenz, in the first heat of his wounded pride, had looked forward as the one of revenge. But now that it was come, the revenge was too absolute to be sweet. It

was more than revenge, it was cruelty, to have kept this grim and heartless silence, to have let that unfortunate woman reach this very spot still wrapped in her insane illusions. Those two women in the carriage had grievously hurt his pride, and they were at his mercy; but it was a question whether at this moment Ascelinde or Vincenz suffered more acutely. His nature revolted against the unfair advantage he had taken. As he stood staring at the flat country, with his back generously turned to the carriage, while he printed off every cloud upon his memory with the agonised concentration of the moment, he felt that he would give everything he possessed, his sister Anna perhaps excepted, if, by a stroke of magic, the real Draskócs could have been transformed into something ten times more splendid than the imaginary Draskócs had ever been.

For a few seconds Dr Komers heard nothing behind him except the jingle of a carriage-bell and the puffing of the driver’s pipe. Ascelinde must have remained rooted and fixed as she had been when last she spoke. Then there was the sound of a heavy weight sinking down suddenly, and immediately there followed a tremendous burst of tears.

Such a burst of tears! Vincenz had never had even a distant notion of what a real burst of tears was until this moment: his ignorance was enlightened now. Ascelinde did not shed tears often, but the flood-gates once let loose, they burst forth with the violence of a torrent. This woman never did things upon a small scale; her tears were only in proportion to her person. Her sobs made the carriage shake; her wails must have struck terror into the hearts of any horses not as completely

deadened by fatigue as these dust-laden quadrupeds: even the driver forgot the next puff of his pipe, and the duck burst into a quack of alarm as it fluttered splashing across the pond. Small wonder if Ascelinde wept! With this flood of tears she was weeping away whole avenues of lofty trees, whole terraces and turrets, entrance-gates and flights of steps: her tears were as plentiful as the waters of her imaginary lake, her sobs as deep as the phantom-mines of wealth, whose fond memory she was forced to relinquish. She had been seven years old when she saw these things last; she was fifty now. During forty-three years the memories had lain and grown; what wonder that, brought thus face to face with the original, the big woman should be annihilated? At the first burst Vincenz turned round terrified. He was but an ignorant man after all, and had but a very dim notion of what might be expected to follow upon this truly feminine hurricane. He did not look at Madame Mohr, however,—he looked past her at her daughter. Would Gretchen break down? If Ascelinde's substantial frame were so shaken by this grief, then must not the effect on that perishable blossom be fatal? And he was then her murderer? Oh, terror of suspense!

Gretchen did break down, only a minute later than her mother. She too, like Ascelinde, had been standing in the carriage; she too now sank down and threw herself back on the seat, and she too drew out her handkerchief and convulsively hid her face behind it.

Dr Komers was just calling on the earth to open and swallow him up, when he checked his mental invocation at a sound which struck on his ear.

Oh, joy of relief! Those were

not sobs; she was not weeping, she was laughing. With her face buried in her handkerchief, she was attempting to smother the irresistible laughter which overpowered her without mercy. It was a mere chance, after all, whether the ludicrous side or the tragical side of the situation came uppermost—it was such a nice question of balance between laughter and tears. For Ascelinde it was unbroken tragedy; for Gretchen, perhaps the solitary duck, survivor of so many fictitious swans, decided the balance in favour of comedy. Each view in its way was overpowering, and Gretchen, with her face behind her handkerchief, was entirely overpowered. Her dreams of yesterday were dispelled, her fortune was unmade again, her pedestal was shattered under her feet; and Gretchen looked at the broken pieces and realised that they were broken, and laughed with a mirth as wild as though they had been the fragments of some weight suddenly lifted from off her mind. Again and again her laugh rose up, mingling with her mother's sobs. She laughed as only the very young and the very inexperienced can laugh, in such an excess of agony and enjoyment that the sound echoed far along the lonely road, and the deserted house stared at her in astonishment over its rotten enclosure; for it was many, many years since such a sound of mirth had struck against the crumbling walls of Draskócs.

While Ascelinde still wept and Gretchen still laughed, another sound, rolled up in the distance and drowned even the wailing sobs. The rumbling thunder had burst into a loud warning, and Vincenz, looking round, saw that the great vault overhead had grown gloomy, threatening every moment to let

loose a storm of rain. The overburdened clouds hung ready to break without further warning.

It was necessary to find shelter, and there was no shelter but this desolate house alongside. The necessity for action gave back to Vincenz his lost presence of mind. Ascelinde, who appeared to have wept away all her strength for the moment, allowed herself passively to be helped out of the carriage.

They werestanding close in front of what seemed to be a gate in the centre of the plank wall. There was no handle, no keyhole, no bell-rope visible, no smoke issuing from the chimney of the house, and no step or movement to be heard inside the planking. A few loud raps from Dr Komers's stick started a hollow sound, but were followed

by deep silence. The solitary duck in the pond was the only thing which seemed to speak of a human presence. It was a slender piece of evidence; but Gretchen argued that where there was a duck, there must also be somebody who intended to eat that duck.

At a more vigorous blow against the wooden gate the planks creaked and trembled, but held together for a moment longer; at the next blow they gave way, and two of them fell inwards, but not far inwards, for they were caught against the branches of the bushes within.

It was now possible to effect an entrance, but by no means easy, for a barrier of bushes confronted the travellers, or rather a tangle of interlaced branches, inextricably knit together and crowding up to the very walls of the house.

CHAPTER XXI.—JOSIKA'S GRAVE.

"Above the graves of buried men
The grass hath leave to grow."

—OWEN MEREDITH.

The three intruders paused in the entrance, struck with wonder at the singularity of the scene. The walls of the house were damp and tottering, and stained with streaks of mossy green; the old wooden shutters gaped in rotting feebleness across the black space of windows within; the plank enclosure was irregular and rough; but for all that the spot was bewitchingly beautiful, rich with the wealth of fairy-like ornaments which it had pleased nature to shower upon this lonely garden.

Never in the height of its best days, such as Ascelinde had persuaded her memory to remember it, had Droskócs looked as beautiful as to an artist's eye it would have seemed now in its downfall.

And yet the sight brought with

it an irresistible melancholy; for the rose season was past its height, and on all sides the overblown roses hung ready to fall at a touch. At every step the tangled bushes trembled, and shook down a rain of petals,—pink petals, grown yellow and curling at the edges. But those showers which fell on all sides scarcely reached the ground; myriads of petals were caught in the arms of green branches so thickly intertwined that the rose-leaves lay there in bleached and faded heaps. The three intruders were wading ankle-deep in the rose-leaves of years past; generations of rose-leaves, heaped up in every stage of decay—the highest freshly shed, the lowest crumbling already into the soft brown mould.

No oppressed nation breaking

into rebellion had ever run such riot as the now neglected Draskócs roses, whose office it had once been to be cooked up with sugar and made into jam. The tyranny of man had ceased for them. Liberty! was the cry of the Draskócs roses now; and the pink roses and the white roses, meeting across the path, embraced each other with unbridled passion, or strangled each other with fierce delight. They look like intoxicated revellers, too, those pink roses with the dark purple flush which the hot sun has burnt into them: no longer the shyly blushing buds of a month ago, they stare bold and unveiled into the face of the sky, while the white ones hang their heads, wan and pale, like beauties after a long night of bacchanalian dissipation.

And the rebellious flowers are not content with having their way down here. They have mounted on to higher ground; they have flung themselves on every available hold, they have peeped over the wooden barricade, they have barred up the window more effectually than the falling planks, and scaling the walls of the house, they have hung up their red flags over the very grave of the tyrant. Two fir-trees stand beside the door, and the left one has fallen a victim already to the strangling roses: there it stands, brown and dead, where a glimpse can be caught between the smothering mass of flowers; but the other still lives, vigorously pushing a glistening dark-green arm outward, as though it would free itself from the certain death which has crept upon it in such beautiful guise, while above its head the triumphant roses float at a giddy height.

By dint of much perseverance, with the help of a penknife, and very much at the expense of his coat-sleeves, Vincenz had succeeded

in fraying a passage to the house, Gretchen following close on his steps; while Ascelinde, limp and mournful brought up the rear, too deeply dejected to defend her trailing garments against the grasp of the roses which, stretching forth eager fingers on either side, greedily stripped off the *cascade des larmes* and shed them profusely on the ground. "There are still the rooms inside," she confided in a whisper to her daughter; "there are still the rooms and—and—the jewels."

They had struggled as far as the fir-trees, and Vincenz tried the door, but it scarcely moved when he shook it, and not a sound came from within. The whitewash of the walls, no longer white, fell off in flakes and crumbled in yellowish powder on to the heads of rose-bushes alongside.

The necessity of getting under shelter had grown more urgent than ever. The mass of lead-coloured clouds had gathered together and hardened at the edges into thunderous rims. A white glare flashed out over the country, bathing each rose-head in ghastly light, and sunk down and flashed out again.

They made their way round the house, having to force each step of the passage. It was all a repetition of the same thing—dead and dying roses on all sides. At the back, however, there was a change. Here a small space had been cleared, and a plot of rudely planted vegetables varied the monotony of the scene. The vegetables were only a few carrots and a meagre row of lettuce; but they supported the evidence of the duck, for they certainly had not come here by themselves. On the damp bed there was the mark of a footprint. Vincenz stooped to examine it, and just then he heard

Gretchen exclaim, "Oh, look !—What is this ?"

There was an old wooden shed behind the house, and she was pushing open the door. Inside there stood a half-starved cow, with its head turned over its shoulder, and its stupidly patient eyes fixed on the intruders, while it slowly whisked its tail.

The sight of the cow threatened to make Ascelinde break down once more. Was this all that remained of the stabling for the many horses which had grown so prodigiously in her memory ?

"I beg you to compose yourself," said Vincenz apprehensively.

Ascelinde struggled with her emotion, gulped down her tears, and held out her hand to Dr Komers. She confessed, in a shaking voice that it was not his fault if Draskócs had come down to this ; but—for her spirit even now was not quite crushed—could he not tell her—she remembered now that he had said that land was more valuable than houses—could he not tell her how much land there was belonging to this ?

There was exactly this garden and one field, Dr Komers believed, and he communicated his belief, briefly but delicately.

"This garden, one field, and a tumble-down house," summed up Gretchen to herself, "and a cow and a duck." This was the inheritance to be divided with Kurt ; this was the fortune which she had suspected Dr Komers of coveting. Oh, she could have laughed again, as she had laughed on the road ! She an heiress ! An heiress to what ? To this tottering ruin and to the weeds that grew around it. She could almost have resigned herself, for justice' sake, to beg Dr Komers's pardon, only that he had interdicted the subject, and she could not find courage to revive it.

A stealthy creak of wood aroused her ; and scanning the brick-paved open passage which was the original of Ascelinde's "colonnade," they all became aware that on the edge of the unclosed door a skinny hand was resting, and that, through the chink thus formed, there stared out at them a strange face, weirdly human in its outlines, and motionless in its position.

Dr Komers reached the door just in time to see it closed in his face ; but one wrench of his arm was enough to tear open the feeble plank, and he found himself confronted straight by an old woman in a dirty orange-coloured dress, and with a dirty lemon-coloured face.

She was the strangest old woman that Vincenz had ever seen. Her face was long, lean, and withered ; her left shoulder was several inches higher than her right one ; her orange-coloured dress had to go up a hill and down a hill again upon her deformed back. And yet, hideous though she was, there yet remained something to say that she had once been handsome, perhaps even beautiful. Her eyes were faultlessly cut, although they were the eyes of a woman of eighty years ; and the nose, now as sharp as the beak of a bird of prey, must have been a perfect aquiline nose sixty years ago. In spite of her deformity, she moved with a rapidity which was almost startling, and whatever her shoulders might be, her long arms were anything but the arms of a cripple. The old woman proved to be stone deaf, shrill-voiced and bad-tempered, and Vincenz seeing that questions were useless, took the law into his own hands, and proceeded to examine the house.

Ascelinde had suffered much, but there were still fresh disappointments to come : she had still

to see the pillars of the entrance-hall dwindle down to rough wooden props, the mosaic pavement of the passage to irregularly laid red bricks, the damasks into worthless, moth-eaten garments, the family rubies to a paltry string of garnets. At every step through the shabby rooms, whose windows the broken shutters darkened, and across whose rotten floor the mice scampered squeaking before them, some idol of Ascelinde's was overthrown, never to rise again.

Four moderate-sized rooms occupied the whole of the space down here: an insecure wooden staircase led up to some higher region, which Vincenz would in all probability have left unexplored, had not the yellow-faced woman, till now a passive and sullen spectator, suddenly placed herself across their passage, and adopted an attitude of defence.

Since she was so anxious to keep them from that staircase, argued Gretchen, it stood to reason that there was something to be hidden up there; and while Vincenz began to expostulate with the excited woman, Gretchen slipped past them and gained the landing above.

She looked round her. It was very dark up here, but she could make out two closed doors. She opened the first: a whirl of dust blew into her face; there were spider-webs spun across the entrance. It was nothing more than a lumber-room, with a few broken chairs, the wreck of a long-abandoned cradle, and a heap of rags on the ground. She put her hand on the next door. This was the door of her mother's old nursery, though Gretchen did not know it. It did not open quite as easily, but it yielded at last, and starting back in wonder and amazement, she called to the others below.

"Come up, quick, quick! There is something—there is somebody here!"

In the next instant Dr Komers was by her side, and Gretchen, pointing forwards, whispered beneath her breath—

"What is it? Is he alive?"

The room was a low attic, with a sloping ceiling and one deep set skylight window. It was bare of ornament, and almost of furniture. Ascelinde, reaching the doorway, swept her eyes round and felt that everything was familiar, even the looking-glass on the wall, even the crack which ran across it. It made her feel six years old again; it was the identical crack which, by clambering on to a chair, she had been able then to get across her nose; and now, without any clambering, the same crack mutilated the same feature. A deep leather arm-chair, its cover hanging in tatters, stood near the window. In this arm-chair there sat a motionless figure, the profile seen distinctly against the light of the window and the square of leaden sky behind.

Gretchen might well ask whether, what she saw were alive or not; for that figure, so shrunken and small, was scarcely human to look at, and the wide-open eyes were glassy and fixed. It was the figure of a very, very old man. His feet, dangling helplessly to the floor, seemed to have withered away in the loose worsted slippers; his hands showed every bone; and there was but a feeble fringe of white hair falling under the edge of his black skull-cap. And while they still stared at this dismal picture, a second figure stepped into the frame. The orange-coloured dress of the old woman brushed past them, her lemon coloured face was bent over the old man in the chair.

Everything is a matter of comparison in this world : the woman of eighty looked positively young, thus closely brought in contrast with the man's petrified features. This that was written on his face and figure was not to be expressed by the mere words "old age"; the woman beside him was old, but he was more than old. Near the ashy tint of his face, the streak of angry red in her cheek might almost have been mistaken for freshness ; the skin which in her had hardened into parchment, in him was worn away almost to transparency. Every muscle and bone appeared to have shrivelled from the mere force of time : it seemed as though the fibre and material of which Nature had fashioned him had been used up long ago, and he had sat since then in this same tattered chair, forgotten both by his fellow-creatures and by the Angel of Death, breathing on from day to day in a state of existence scarcely worth the name of life.

How many young souls had been forced to take wing from out of their vigorous bodies during the century that this man had counted as his lifetime ! Better and nobler and more precious lives had been cut off short without mercy : the roses outside had put out their buds and shed their leaves and beaten against the window-pane for years, while this old man had sat here through summer and winter, through bright days and dull days, in a state of living torpor or torpid life, forgotten and uncared for.

The movement in the room seemed to have roused some spark of his lingering life ; or perhaps the thunder-clap, which at this moment shook the ceiling above his head, had awakened him. He turned his head slowly, and his

blear eyes fell straight upon the figure of the girl in the doorway. Gretchen had come forward two steps ; there was an overblown rose in her hand, and a bunch of roses stuck in the front of her dead-black dress—they had begun to fall already—and as she stood there, with the floating petals around her, it seemed as if the queen of the rebellious roses had broken in here, and was advancing ready to brave him to his face.

Perhaps the old man had seen some such figure long ago, for after a minute a voice, faint and far off, reached the listener's ears.

"Yes, I have a long life before me—a long life before me."

The words were like an echo of something heard before. Surely that phrase was familiar !

He went on nodding, with his eyes always on Gretchen, mumbling the words over again between his toothless jaws. He did not seem to hear the thunder-clap, which just at this moment shook the ceiling above his head, and made the window rattle in its socket.

"They shall not touch you, Jósika !" cried the woman, bending over him. "I shall take care they shall not touch you."

"Did you hear that ? She calls him Jósika," said Ascelinde, in a whisper of extreme agitation. "I know of only one Jósika, and that was my guardian. Doctor Komers, is this my guardian ?"

But Dr Komers could give her no information, although he was beginning to believe that this was indeed all that remained of Ascelinde's guardian, and that this shrivelled figure in the chair was the man who, forty-three years ago, had bowed Eleonore Damianovics out of the house, and walked back into it, rubbing his hands as he laughed over the word "Justice." He had kept his word ; he had survived the

end of the lawsuit; but his long life was behind him now, instead of before him, and must be gone from him soon. And the deformed woman beside him—could this be the handsome housekeeper of other days? She was the only creature who cared for his life or his death; and yet he seemed to have forgotten her presence, as his lack-lustre eyes hung on the girlish figure that confronted him. Most likely he could not see her distinctly; she may have seemed like a vision of something unreal to his failing eyes—like the Angel of Death come at last to end this long, long, and useless life. But death could surely not come in so fair a shape, with hair like fretted gold and dewy lips softly parted. Hark! Is that not rather the Angel of Death riding on the blast outside, which comes with sudden tearing force sweeping right over the plain? Is not that his trumpet thundering across the sky and his signal flashing straight into their eyes, in a sheet of blinding light?

"Yes—yes, I have a long life before me," muttered Jósika again—"a long life;" and then the eyes fixed on Gretchen seemed to go out like the flame of a candle burnt down to the socket, and the eyelids closed.

• The blast, tearing onward,

reached the spot; it seized the rose-bushes with furious strength, and all around the house there was a rush as of a mighty body of water. For the space of a second the wind held its breath, and then the rush burst out with double strength, and roared round them on all sides. A cloud of dust was whirled past the window, and a dense shower of rose-leaves was carried with it, high up in the air.

Upon Gretchen a fit of nervous terror had descended. It had grown very dark in the room, and the first heavy drops of rain fell like blows upon the window-pane. A fancy came over her that that whirling wind must carry with it something else, something beyond the dust and rose-leaves which flew past in a cloud. Dust and flower-petals seemed too paltry a prey for the strength of that mighty hurricane.

In the glare of the lightning she saw the old woman bending across the chair; there was a tear on her wrinkled cheek. Together with the lightning came the thunder, making the house tremble this time through every fibre of its mouldering walls.

But though they waited long, the old man in the chair did not open his eyes again.

CHAPTER XXII.—PRINCESS TRYPHOSA.

"Let none object my lingering way,—
I gain, like Fabius, by delay."
—GAY.

When the travellers again reached the peaceful Hercules valley, they found it by no means as peaceful as when they had left it a week ago. Some people looked scared, others looked anxious; door-bolts and shutter-bars were being examined, and firearms were much in demand.

Alarming reports had been started, and were being circulated from mouth to mouth. These reports spoke of robber-bands among the hills. It was asserted that dozens of savage men, bent upon bloodshed and pillage, and armed with death-dealing weapons, were haunt-

ing the overhanging crags. Terrifying stories were told, in which it was positively affirmed that mysterious individuals, mysteriously muffled up, had been heard at dead of night to chant mysterious songs around a roaring red fire. The Hercules valley, now at the height of its season, was thrown into a panic; and the rustic police set up guards at the two entrances by which the place might be surprised.

Every day some new version gained favour; and on the day of Madame Mohr and her daughter's return, the newest story was one referring to the rocky mountain-face which rose straight behind the *Cursalon*. At the height of some hundred feet the rock was split by a narrow gorge, leading to the very edge of the sheer precipice. From that edge a man could look down straight upon the Hercules baths at his feet; and this was exactly what the robbers were reported to have been seen doing—laying their plans, no doubt for a nightly attack.

Ascelinde, crushed in spirit as she already was, and now met by those startling tales, took to her bed immediately after her arrival, and declared her intention never to leave it again. In truth it still remained a question whether a serious illness would not be the result of that journey.

But Gretchen was skeptical about the robbers; she declined to accept the evidence unsifted. "People always let their fancy run away with them," she contemptuously remarked to herself, as on the day after their return, she was noting down the expenses of the Draskócs expedition in the same leather-bound volume in which she had made her estimate of fortune on the afternoon of Ash-Wednesday.

It must not be supposed, in spite of Gretchen's burst of laughter at the gate of Draskócs, that the failure had left no dejection behind it. The dream had been cherished too long and tenderly to be thus yielded up without a pang. In this very account-book there stood a calculation of the supposed income which she had assigned to the imaginary estate; and it was with a bitter sigh that she now drew an ink-line across it. There was no denying that her chances of fortune-making were narrowed; and, looking at her situation from a logical point of view, the upshot of her meditations was as follows:—

A pretty girl without money has got one chance of success in life,—marriage. I am a pretty girl without money, therefore it stands to reason that marriage is my one chance of success. Shall I throw it away, as so many foolish women have done, for the sake of beautiful whiskers, or eloquent eyes? I do not think that any whiskers or beard that ever grew would look beautiful in a garret, and even the fire of eloquent eyes must be fed with something more substantial than sighs and poetry. "No, thank heavens!" said Gretchen, with a devout sigh—"thank heavens, I am sensible;" and it never struck her, as she said it, that all this excess of sense was in itself a folly, greater perhaps than many outspoken phases of the disease. "Thank heavens, I am sensible. People can say what they like, but it is ever so much easier to be happy when one has a whole dress on, instead of a ragged one, and ever so much easier to be virtuous when one has eaten roast partridges and iced pudding, than when one has dined off bread and cheese. Oh no, I have no liking at all for bread-crusts; bread and-cheese marriages

may appear attractive to bread-and-butter Misses, but the thing will not suit me. No," concluded Gretchen, with an almost unnecessary decision, as she drew line after line across the Draskócs calculation. "No, I am afraid—that is to say, I think that I have only one chance of fortune!"

As she reflected thus, her eyes chanced to fall on the page which faced the imaginary estimate. There was a list written there, a sort of inventory apparently; she had put it there herself not many weeks ago, and now her last ink-stroke was arrested, as with sudden attention she scanned the opposite sheet.

She read it over and over again carefully, with thoughtfully puckered brow, and at last she exclaimed aloud—

"Yes, I have another chance!"

And leaving her last ink-stroke incompleated, Gretchen plunged headlong into a sea—of arithmetical figures, in which she was still disporting herself when, an hour later, Belita entered the room.

The news of the Draskócs failure had been received by Belita last night with a certain amount of consternation, but without any remorse. Gretchen's indignant reproaches had entirely failed in their effect,—it was not possible to quarrel with the Contessa. She cheerfully acknowledged that she had made a mistake, and cut the matter short by remarking that Dr Komers must, after all, be a greater fool than she had taken him for.

"Are those the bills for your new black dresses?" she asked now, throwing a glance of interest at the account-book. "If it is a dress-estimate, I will help you."

"No," answered Gretchen, coming to the surface of the arithmet-

ical sea; "it is a calculation about my fortune."

"But my dear child——"

"Belita," said Gretchen, solemnly, "I have got a new idea about my fortune. Shall I tell you how I mean to make it?"

"What other idea can you possibly need to have beyond Baron Tolnay?—provided you are lucky enough to get him."

"But must there be only one way?" retorted Gretchen, impatiently. "Why should I not make my fortune in my own way?"

"But what way could by any possibility, be better than the one you are on?"

"I will tell you, Belita; listen," said Gretchen, with a ring of triumphant superiority; and taking up her account-book, she read from it aloud: "'Thirty-eight Turkish gold-bags, one hundred and fifty silver-bags, nine hundred and ninety Russian roubles, five thousand bejas zirmilik, three golden chalices, seventeen golden necklaces and golden ear-rings,—enough to fill three full-grown skulls.'"

"Well," said Belita, a little startled, "who does all this belong to? Where is it to be seen? What does it mean?"

"It is the brigand's treasure," was the impressive answer.

"And what has the brigand's treasure to do with you?"

"Simply that I mean to find it."

Belita burst into a long and hearty laugh, while Gretchen, her dignity a little ruffled, proceeded to expound her views. The list in the account-book had been written down from memory, on the evening after her meeting with the Bohemian. About so interesting a subject as a brigand's treasure, the methodical Gretchen could not omit to make a note at the time even though she had then enter-

tained no serious intentions with regard to it ; it was only now that she recognised its true importance. She had spent an hour in abstruse calculation, had ascertained what proportion of the treasures she would have to relinquish to Government, and what income, at a given rate of percentage, she could derive from the remainder.

"The ear-rings can be melted down," she concluded ; "but the three chalices I shall, of course, return to churches."

She could not understand what made Belita laugh. "Since the treasure had never been found, it stood to reason that it must be there still ; and it only required an energetic and sensible person, unhampered by superstition, to discover it. She was a sensible and energetic person, unhampered by superstition, therefore it stood to reason," &c.

"My dear child," said Belita at last, when she had, with some difficulty, been brought to understand that Gretchen was not joking, "I am afraid that the air of the Hercules valley does not agree with you. These waters of Hercules seem to go to everybody's head but mine ; is it any mythological influence, I wonder ? If you had been at school here, you certainly would never have carried off the *prix de logique*

It was a mystery to the Contessa how any one, holding a baron in the hand, should prefer to him a mysterious treasure, which was not even in the bush, but rather hidden among millions of bushes and, which even might prove not to be, and never to have been, there at all.

"How on earth can you talk of finding the brigand's treasure, when you cannot even find that horrid black hole where you tell me it is buried ?"

"But I intend to find *Gaura Dracului*."

"By what means ?"

"By means of the Bohemian."

"But since the devout fool will not break his vow ?"

"He need not break his vow ; I have settled all my plans."

And Gretchen's plans were laid with a truly feminine cunning ; though as a first step towards them she herself would require to eat a slice of that most distasteful of all dishes, called humble pie. She had no more liking for humble pie than for bread-crusts ; but she hoped that the unsavoury dish might this time be more than an *entrée* to the roast partridges and iced pudding. The Bohemian was to be sought out, and the offer, once so coldly rejected, was this time to be graciously accepted. Once having got him to guide her among the mountains, Gretchen had full confidence in her own skill and management in laying traps for the innocent man's secret, and causing his simple mind to betray itself unawares. As for the robbers, she settled the difficulty by not believing in them ; and a couple of pistols would, in any case, be protection enough.

Belita listened with a dissatisfied air.

"Your interest in that unpronounceable place was always suspicious to me, Margherita. I cannot understand what gave you the idea of this most extraordinary wild-geese chase."

"But it was papa's old manuscript—I wanted him to finish it, And oh, Belita"—there was a sudden break in Gretchen's voice, her lips quivered ominously.

"*Misericordia!* *Bambina*, is there anything else wrong ?"

"Will—will papa ever be well enough to finish his manuscript ? He is getting well so slowly."

She would call it "getting well" still, even though the first sight of his face this morning had struck her with a chill of apprehension. Yes, there was a change here too, even after this one week of absence. Of course he was getting cured, of course the tutelary god of the valley was not going to send him home as he came—the great Hercules had surely too much regard for his own reputation to allow of such a thing, but other people had got cured faster. Adalbert had been outstripped by many whose case had at first sight appeared more desperate.

"He had his forty-eighth bath to-day," said Gretchen, opening another page of her account-book; "and I had calculated that after four dozen baths he would leave his chair, and after six dozen be able to walk up the highest mountain in the country."

"So he will, my dear," burst in Belita, speaking with all the more rattling cheerfulness that she felt her friend's fears to be well-founded—"so he will, if you only follow my advice. Do you know what would be better for him than a hundred sulphur baths? Why, to see his daughter's fortune made, of course!"

"I have told you that I mean to make it in my own way, Belita; I will not be dictated to."

"Oho, my pretty fortune-hunter!" cried the Contessa, "we are very fastidious in our choice, it seems; but how do you know that there is any choice remaining?"

"I don't understand," said Gretchen, staring at her friend.

"No; and you don't understand either what has kept me languishing on in this rocky fastness, and wasting the sweetness of Parisian toilettes upon the more than desert air, when I might have been wear-

ing my *homard écrasé* at Ostende, or my *éclipse de lune bonnet* at Baden-Baden. It is all for your sake, ungrateful Margherita!"

"I never asked you to stay," said Gretchen, completely mystified.

"But you might thank one for it. *Misericordia!* What trouble I have had! Keeping my eyes open from morning to night, and not even leaving myself time enough to write the most pressing letters to my *couturière*."

"And what have you seen while you kept your eyes open?" with an uneasy curiosity.

"Plenty, my dear,—too much. Do you remember my telling you that Baron Tolnay was not caught yet?"

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, it is high time you were back. If this had gone on for another week, I should have been driven by the considerations of friendship to flirt with Baron Tolnay myself, in order to keep him away from that—No!" broke off the Contessa abruptly, "you shall find it out without me. Besides, my time is up, I have an appointment at home—some Wallachian embroidery, which Providence has cast in my path, and which forms a new and distinct interest in life. Do you dine at the restaurant to-day?"

"Yes," said Gretchen, further mystified.

"Well, keep your eyes open, that is all: there is a rival in the camp."

Belita walked to the door. "You have time to arm for battle," she observed, turning once more. "Baron Tolnay is at Pesth now, seeing after some international congress, I believe; and perhaps, also buying unbreakable glass for the *Cursalon*." And with this parting shot, the Contessa took her

departure, leaving Gretchen much perturbed.

A rival in the camp! What woman's vanity would not be roused at the word? What ambition could sleep through such an alarm? Gretchen began to reflect that the brigand's treasure was not found yet, and that it would be imprudent, until it was found, to go without some second string to the bow of her fortune.

The dinner-hour had never been so long in coming; and when it did come, there was nothing at first sight to satisfy Gretchen's curiosity.

The verandah was crowded: knives and forks and women's tongues contended noisily against each other. The Hercules fountain, straight opposite, tried to drown the clatter of the knives and forks and the wagging of the women's tongues in its monotonous splash; while above, on his pedestal, the stone Hercules, leaning on his stone club, looked down with stony indifference on the doings at his feet. To this Hercules, who remembered Roman warriors, and who had gazed upon Roman beauties, the black-coated waiters who darted in and out of the verandah must have seemed indeed degenerate specimens of mankind.

There were only two vacant tables, and these stood next each other. One of them was the table generally assigned to the Mohrs; the other was almost twice as large, and assigned to whom Gretchen did not know.

It was all the uninteresting and ordinary routine, except indeed that out of Gretchen's napkin there tumbled a more than usually eloquent and more than usually lengthy specimen of Esculapian poetry, headed by the desperately interrogative title: "Doctor or

Patient?" and of which the verses ended with the alternate refrain—

"Be thou my Doctor!"

and

"Be thou my Patient!"

Whatever might be the opinion of other people, there was no doubt that Dr Kokovics still continued to think himself "born under a rhyming planet." But even this symptom of unabated poetical persecution had come to be a part of normal life; and Gretchen's equanimity was scarcely disturbed by the poet-doctor's ardent desire

"To feel that lily pulse,
To view that rose-leaf tongue."

Nor even, though in the words of the bard—

"That golden head should throb
Or ache those pearly teeth,"

was it likely that Dr Kokovic's services should be called into requisition. Neither did Gretchen feel moved by the second appeal, in which the poet, with a spasmodic reversal of the rôles, groaned out the symptoms of his malady, and described the fever with which he thirsted after

"The medicine of thy smile!"

Just as the verse had been disposed of, there was a new arrival on the verandah. Heads were turned, and voices for one moment fell into a lower key, as the landlord in person, assisted by a swarm of waiters, began to set plates and chairs aright. Gretchen looked up just in time to see the vacant table alongside of them become alive, amidst a great deal of creaking and clattering, and napkins being obsequiously waved, and French and Roumanian being jumbled up together.

The hovering cloud of waiters

dispersed at last, leaving Gretchen's view unobstructed.

At first sight the newly arrived family appeared to be bewilderingly large, but a short survey resolved it into the following elements: a dark and good-looking man of mature age, apparently the head of the family presided at the table. His complexion was oriental, but his manners were French. Except for a blood-red fez, his attire in no ways fell short of the highest standard of European elegance. Alongside of him sat a ponderous, middle-aged woman, with a dark shade on her upper lip, and a suggestion of past, but very long past, beauty on her face. Beside her was placed a dark-eyed girl, ungainly of feature, and of a well-nigh mahogany complexion. Next came two pale-faced, sickly boys of twelve and fourteen, with a starved and timid tutor between them.

With her back turned straight towards the Mohrs' table, there sat another woman, whose face Gretchen was not able to see. At about the height of her elbow a small curly black head moved about restlessly. The boy four or five, with the miniature dagger stuck into his embroidered waistband, called the lady "maman"; but it was the Swiss *bonne* alongside who tied the napkin under his chin, and assisted him in the struggle with his egg-shell. Gretchen could not even catch sight of the passive mother's profile; she was a very passive mother, there could be no doubt of that. Two or three times the curly head turned right round, and Gretchen found herself confronted by a pair of very black eyes, looking out of a small glowing face. It was the face of a singularly pretty boy, and, watching it, she felt her curiosity aroused. The son's good looks seemed to augur well for those of the mother.

The lines of her figure, as far as could be judged by the sweep of shoulder, were full, soft, and rounded. She wore a rather loose-fitting dress of deep purple silk, profusely trimmed and of a costly texture, but of a colour too intense to be in strict accordance with the fashion of the day, which had some time since decreed that the sicklier a colour was, the higher it was to be prized. Her hair, rolled up above her neck and disposed in an edifice of massive coils and plaits, was quite black. In fact, Gretchen thought that she had never known what really black hair was until this moment. It was not that purple or blue-black hair so much sung by poets, nor that silky black which shines in the light, but it was simply an uncompromising, unvarnished dead black. As I have mentioned the word varnish, I may as well add that this woman's hair really gave the impression of black paint which has not been varnished, for it caught no glossy reflection along the edge of its coils—it was all shadow and no light.

While Gretchen was pursuing her observations, Kurt was making vain efforts to secure the attentions of the distracted waiters. The "barbarous grandees," as he called them, absorbed the mental as well as physical powers of the whole establishment. The hovering cloud of waiters had first dispersed, only to return armed with a battery of boiled eggs; then, after hovering a little longer, had dispersed a second time and reappeared a second time, bearing several melons aloft. The whole table shone with juicy, pale-red slices, while the black vultures pounced upon the ruins of the egg-shells and cleared them away, all but one egg, which only now was being slowly cracked under the spoon of the unseen woman whose

back-view Gretchen had been curiously contemplating. She took a long time to eat an egg, thought Gretchen, as she observed the deliberate way in which the shell was being attacked. They were strange people, certainly; it could not be good for a child of four years to gorge himself with melon, as the owner of the curly head was doing. Gretchen began to wonder what would follow upon the melon. A large soup-tureen solved the question. What had come before had only been a slight skirmishing, this was the earnest of dinner beginning. Under the claws of the vultures, the pyramid of melon-rinds vanished, together with the last lingering egg-shell. One pale red slice remained; it was on the plate of the black haired young woman. At this rate she ate her way on steadily through the long and complicated meal, always a stage or two behind the rest of the party. When they were eating fish she was eating soup; when they had reached the national *mamaliga* (a preparation of the maize grain, and first cousin to the Italian *polenta*), she was preparing to dissect the fried trout on her plate.

Meanwhile the brother and sister had ended their repast, and Kurt produced an elegant cigar-case.

"I wish I had told Tolnay to bring me some stronger cigars from Pesth," remarked the precocious youth, as with the aid of the medicinal stanzas he kindled the spark in his "Virginia."

"I am very glad you did not," said Gretchen, "you smoke far too much for your age. I wonder where you have picked up those expensive habits!"

"At school," said Kurt, with a peculiar twinkle of his eye. "I have learnt a great deal at school; smoking is not my only accom-

plishment. But never mind," he added cheerfully, "I shall make Mr Howard replenish my case. Since I have not asked him for money, it is at least fair that he should give me cigars."

"Kurt, do stop talking nonsense," said Gretchen, impatiently, while with her eyes she still followed the movements of their neighbours. As she spoke her attention was arrested by something unlooked for.

Up to this moment the black-haired woman had remained so immovable in her position, with her back and the massive coils of her hair turned so steadily towards the Mohrs' table, that Gretchen was positively taken by surprise to see her now slowly turning her head.

She had demolished her fried trout inch by inch, until there remained only one inch to be disposed of, and now she paused in the act of carrying the last morsel to her mouth, and, with the crisp brown tail held delicately between the fingers of her right hand, she deliberately turned in her chair and faced round towards the neighbouring table. Her hand remained poised in its position, and the loose silk sleeve, falling back, showed a full and well-shaped arm. It was an expressive arm, but it was not a white arm—dark-skinned, and with a soft shade over it as of a dusky down. The hand was of the same rich hue, and the well-cushioned fingers held the fishy tail with great firmness, although most delicately. Gretchen noticed that the finger-tips were tinged with a deeper shade of yellow. It was only later that this yellow shade was explained to her as the result of the innumerable cigarettes which the Roumanian lady of degree fabricates for her own use and with her own skilful hands.

The turning of the stranger's

neck was gradual : having reached the desired angle, she fixed her eyes first upon Kurt, and then the slow gaze moved on to Gretchen's face, and there for a full half minute it remained fixed.

Gretchen had seen those eyes before. They had haunted her memory from the moment that the travelling carriages had passed each other on the road, until the picture of Draskócs had taken all other pictures from her mind. But seeing them again, they were at once familiar. They were as dark as her hair, and, like the hair, they seemed to want light a little ; but they were beautiful eyes, long-shaped, well-cut, and velvety-black. The face was a rather full oval, with a low forehead and straight black eyebrows,—almost too rich in the line of chin, and the luxurious sweep of the full red lips. She might be twenty-four, or perhaps twenty-five, thought Gretchen, as she marked the deliberate ease of that heavy stare. Her gaze was not keen or penetrating, but it was very persevering, and it remained where it was fixed until it was satisfied. But what could be the satisfaction it wanted ? This fixed gaze had an object. After eating through the previous half of her dinner with such unmoved stolidity, it had not been without reason that she now paused and turned round with the last morsel of fried ut hovering before her lips.

Gretchen went over quickly in thought the phrases which had just been said ; but it was scarcely likely that the discussion of Kurt's

extravagant habits, or of the vices he had learnt at school, or a question as to the quality of his cigars, could have awakened any interest in this Roumanian lady's mind.

For a full half-minute the black eyes remained fixed upon Gretchen's face, and then, as slowly as she had turned round, the woman turned away again, and the hovering morsel of trout was raised to her lips and vanished there from sight.

"Who is that woman ?" Gretchen asked of her brother.

Kurt shrugged his shoulders. "Cannot say, really. One of the barbarous grandees. Have not learnt to particularise them yet."

"But she is beautiful !"

"I rather fancy she is," said Kurt, with the confidence of a connoisseur. "I always told you that it would take very little to make one of those Roumanian women beautiful ; this one has just hit it off, you see."

Undoubtedly she had hit it off, reflected Gretchen ; and all the way home she thought of nothing but the beauty of that face and the stare of those black eyes, until some words behind her roused her from her reflection.

"When is the Baron to return ?" one man was saying to another.

"On Thursday, I hear. She had a letter from him this morning."

"Who had a letter ?" said the first voice. The answer was given in a low tone, but Gretchen just caught it—

"Princess Tryphosa."

BY THE MARL-PIT.

" Scilicet et tempus veniet."

—Verg., *Georg.* i. 498.

HERE where across the marl-pit's lone expanse
The light, grey green and golden, shifts,
- I sit and watch the midge's myriad dance,
The silent eddying swifts.

A trance unutterable holds the fen,
No ripple stirs the sentinel reeds,
Save haply when some quick harsh water-hen
Starts, scattering silver beads.

Such tongueless calm were surely anodyne
Potent to lull a world-worn breast,
Might teach an evil folk that seek a sign,
Peace from their plaintive quest:

Yet when I sit me by the dark-pool's edge,
Strange awe I feel, and shuddering,
And that weird water gleaming through its sedge
Fawns like a guilty thing.

Haply—for fancy loves an idle guess—
Dark feet, long since, and hands that burned,
Hither brought the fruit of an accursed caress,
Cast it within, and turned.

Or lovers wan—for whom no prospect glowed
Of double life and glad, to come,
To whose dim eyes each morrow only showed
Anguish and starless gloom—

Came to this spot with fingers intertwined,
And either drank the other's breath,
Then with the purpose of a single mind
Plunged twain to seek one death,

Some golden decades back, when Love was Love ;
Ere, Mammon flooding all the land,
That old-world passion found, faint arkless dove,
No foothold where to stand.

Or here, when night was shorn of moon or star,
A dark-eyed poet, born to lisp
Honey-sweet melodies, pursued afar
The mad Will-o'-the-wisp,

And as he hastened, lo ! his footstep trips,
And ruining from the marge headlong,
He sank to darkness, bearing on his lips
Foam and an unhewn song.

Such fancies take the dreamer on thy brink,
Mute pool, who holds't thy secrets fast,
And art an uninterpretable link
'Twixt present hours and past ;

Whose surface mirrors in its web of light
To-day's life shifting to and fro,
Whose lowest fathoms muffle round with night
Remnants of long ago.

Yet—for the hidden things shall be revealed,
Even from the sea dead limbs shall start—
A time may come when this sad mere shall yield
To Nature's change or Art :

Then they that pass shall wear a pensive smile,
To see amid dry ooze and stones
Perchance an axe-head, or perchance a pile
Of unremembered bones.

L. J. G.

MALTA AND ITS KNIGHTS.

It is a strange irony of fate which has made the English—dubbed by the first Napoleon a nation of shopkeepers—the heirs of the haughty, fastidious, chivalric Hospitallers; and, stranger still, that the last link in the chain of circumstances which led to this unlooked-for result, was forged by the high-handed enterprise of the great Corsican himself. Nevertheless, it is unquestionably true that we are indebted in no small degree to the religious fanaticism which tempered the stern savagery of the middle ages for the possession of our great Mediterranean arsenal. The history of the Knights of the Hospital of St. John at Jerusalem is the history of one of our most valuable dependencies. Many years ago General Porter contributed to our literature the best and most readable summary of the deeds of the order in a book of which he has now published an enlarged and revised edition, with, we may hope, a prospect of a wider popularity in this age of extended reading. The subject, indeed, sparkles with many facets of interest. The medical man finds light thrown upon the early history of hospitals; the soldier reads with the same enthusiasm which Walter Scott gratefully records in reference to his early studies of the Abbé Vertot, the animated narrative of the sieges of Rhodes and Malta, the greatest leaguers of their respective epochs; and the politician is interested in a constitution alien to any other in the world's history—the autocratic authority of a military chief-tain, tempered by democratic equality of the convent. Yet, after all, it is to the scene of the zenith of their glory and the decay of their spirit, that the English student of the history of the Knights Hospitallers will ever turn; so that they are in our minds, as in popular parlance, less chevaliers of Jerusalem or of Rhodes than knights of Malta. It is a slight indication of this substitution of the *genius loci* for the *esprit de corps*, that General Porter in his earlier pages appears to surrender a point which, to a genuine old *miles Hierosolymitanus*, would have been dearer than his own genealogical proofs, describing the dedication of the original *chef lieu* of the Order at Jerusalem as having been to St John the Almoner, against which degradation of the convent of the illustrious Precursor the learned Paciaude, in the work which he dedicated under Grand Master Pinto to Pope Benedict XIV. (in 1775), protests in lengthy and energetic sentences, striving to show that it was a fallacy, hatched by the envy of the Greeks. Clearly, if the Almoner appears to nineteenth century acumen the proper patron for an order of Hospitallers, it was not long before he was altogether disowned by the fraternity, and the Baptist invested with the tradition of their earliest consecration. In St. John's church at Valetta, in addition to the famous gift of Bajazet, the hand of the Baptist,—captured by the Turks at Constantinople, whither it had

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been conveyed by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, after he had bribed a deacon to steal it from Antioch,—other relics hardly less sacred were deposited, of which Paciaude gives representations. The grand possession, the actual ministrant of the baptism of the Saviour, in a case richly jewelled, was seized by Buonaparte, who, transferring to his own finger the gem which sparkled on the dead hand, desired the case to be taken on board the Orient, and carelessly observed to Hompesch, "You may keep the carrion," which he did, and handed the relic over to the Emperor Paul at St Petersburg, where it still shares the reverence of devout visitants, with another famous relic from Malta—the *icon* of our Lady of Philermos—to which, in the true spirit of modern ultramontaniam, the Papal Order of St John seem to pay their principal regard, to the neglect of their once venerated patron saint.

It is no wonder that the Order of St John have to us mainly a national interest as the possessors of Malta. Had they settled at Genoa, where the merchant princes were most anxious to attract them—where, indeed, was established one of the most flourishing commanderies, and where, in a chapel of the cathedral from which the female sex (as sisters of Herodias's daughter) are rigidly excluded, you may see the Byzantine casket which once held the ashes of the Precursor; or had they remained at Syracuse, where they repaired for a while after the taking of Rhodes, and sculptured Grand Master d'Amboise's arms on the wall of the palazzo now used as a museum,—few would have cared about them, except an antiquarian or two; but even the most prosaic passenger by the Peninsular and

Oriental line, cannot resist an inquiry as to the builders of the stately city, at the foot of whose stupendous ramparts his vessel is anchored; while politicians and ethnologists, in the pursuit of their respective hobbies, constantly come across the legends of the soldier-monks, to whose halls, docks, and fortresses we have succeeded. A few words on the former topic, the city of Valetta, may not be out of place. As seen from the deck of an eastward-bound steamer, it is the modern town which faces the anchorage—for the P. and O. ships go into the Marsamuscetto harbour; and in the days of the great siege, the ridge of high ground on which the present city, built by the contributions of all Christendom in obedience to the bull of Pope Pius IV., stands, was a rocky peninsula with a solitary fort at the extreme end, the harbour's mouth, the fort being named St Elmo after the patron of mariners,—and not only the scene of incalculable bravery and self-sacrifice during the siege, but interesting as the spot to which Abercromby, while it was still in the hands of the French, with a prescience of its future, desired his body to be transported when he fell in the hour of victory. The town which the Turks aimed at destroying stood upon the two central promontories of the opposite side of the "grand harbour," flanked by the French creek on the landward, and the bay below the Naval Hospital at Bighi, on the seaward side; while between the peninsulas lies the dockyard creek, at that time containing the slips on which the galleys were laid up, protected by a strong chain drawn across the mouth of the bay between the castles of St Angelo and St Michael. The Turks, after the fall of St Elmo, brought their fleet into the *Marsa-*

muscetto harbour, and drawing some ships across the promontory at the landward end, below Floriana, launched them on the upper bay of the "grand harbour," and thus completely invested the two strongholds of the Order by sea; while from Corradino, Zabbar, Bighi, Ricasoli, and the lower St Elmo, they raked the fortifications from the land by a nearly complete circle of batteries. The traveller, viewing the scene of the conflict from the height above (the upper Barracca), and reading that the Turkish army numbered forty thousand, might well wonder that they did not, to quote Hushai the Archite (2 Samuel xvii. 13) "bring ropes to that city and draw it into the water, until there be not one small stone found there." And so, indeed, in spite of the most heroic endurance and bravery on the part of the knights, they would have done, but for the ineradicable sloth and indiscipline of an oriental force. They neglected to seize, as they could at first readily have done, Citta Vecchia, the capital of the island, a few miles inland; from whence a small garrison constantly harassed their rear by unexpected attacks, one of which at least saved the besieged by creating a diversion at the very moment when their storming-party were on the point of success, having planted their horsetail standards on the summit of the walls. One of the most graphic and interesting, although little known, narratives of the events of the great siege, was printed at Perugia in 1567, by F. John Anthony Viperan, who had served in the garrison of the capital. His chronicle gives us to understand how imperfectly, in spite of the cordon of troops and batteries, the Moslem blockaded the town. Reinforcements found their way to St Angelo through the

Turkish lines; and even within a few weeks of the termination of the siege, an emissary, sent by the Viceroy of Sicily to report upon the state of affairs in Malta, traversed the enemy's intrenchments, between dawn and sunrise, with a small escort, and without a challenge from a sentinel or an interruption from a patrol. Indeed, but for the jealousies which sundered the councils of Christendom, a more frightful calamity than that which actually befell the besiegers, might have been their portion. The Viceroy of Sicily, hampered by the prudent and grudging instructions of his master, the cold, calculating Philip, only sent assistance at the eleventh hour, and then to the least extent compatible with his own credit and the security of the force detached. Again the Turkish generals by land and sea blundered, scuttled to their ships, squabbled, and disembarked their army to receive a more crushing defeat, and Malta was saved.

General Porter's account of this protracted conflict is one of the best examples yet afforded of the way in which military history ought to be written. Without technical pedantry, and equally without that loose exaggeration of word-painting which passes muster in the present age for picturesque narrative, he sets before his reader the whole detail of the scene, as from day to day increasingly desperate efforts of attack and defence were made by either side. The gigantic artillery of the besiegers, pounded with huge missiles the friable stone of which the ramparts were composed until the wall was reduced to a mere mound of crumbled dust, up which the Turkish levies were driven sword in hand by their officers and janissaries, to be hewn down in heaps by the well-armed and spirited handful

of defenders. The mines and the countermines, with the subterranean combats to which they gave occasion—the encounters in the water, where the swimmers of Dragut strove to break the chain which barred the port, or to destroy the palisade which fenced the shore of Isolu point—the Greek fire and blazing hoops which were tossed to and fro by the combatants,—all are placed vividly before us, and combine to make a picture unequalled in the annals of war. We cannot refrain from expressing a hope that this chapter at least may find a place in the collections of English classics now so much in vogue for educational purposes, both as an example of the decaying art of the historical chronicler, and as a truthful description of a great event in the world's history.

One conspicuous feature of this memorable struggle is the attitude of the native population. Arabs as they clearly are by origin, they did not then, nor do they now, display the slightest inclination to support or amalgamate with any Mohammedan race. Their Catholicism is not only of a strict type, but seems thoroughly to have interpenetrated their national character. A recommendation which appeared in the 'Times' last year, that the future *gendarmérie* of Egypt might be composed of Maltese, is a suggestion which may very possibly be reverted to; for it is founded upon their peculiar qualifications as a race with an Eastern language and Western sympathies. The knights also gave them credit for being good soldiers if well led,—a character which General Porter, from personal observation, and from the annals of the French siege, considers them to have maintained. The history of the French occupation is full of interest, and throws light upon more than one vexed

question of Maltese government. The rule of the Grand Masters, ever oppressive to the natives, in the latter part of the eighteenth century had become positively odious. Instead of being the channel through which a large sum of foreign money was distributed through the island, the Order, after the confiscation of their European property, had been obliged to resort to all manner of devices to exact from the Maltese the means of maintaining their various public establishments. A significant indication of the shifts to which they were driven may be seen in the public museum at Valetta, where a large collection of matrices and dies for coins are preserved—all belonging to the three last Grand Masters; who, by issuing new silver coins, and calling in the old, debased the circulating medium, and utilised much of the plate belonging to the Government, the Langues, and the religious foundations. The smouldering discontent was fostered in masonic lodges, just as the late intrigues in Egypt caused many initiations into French and Italian Freemasonry in that country. When at length the First Consul appeared before Valetta, Hompesch, the Grand Master, found himself deserted and betrayed: as his apologist justly says, De Lisle Adam lost Rhodes in fair fight, but Hompesch lost Malta without the opportunity of striking a blow in its defence. When Napoleon entered the gigantic lines, ramparts and ditches hewn by the labour and cemented with the blood of thousands of Mohammedan captives, he turned to his lieutenant with the remark, "It was well we had somebody to hand us the keys of such a stronghold." He is reported to have contemplated a palace at Bighi, from whence he should rule

the Eastern and Western empires which he intended to form; but fate called him to pursue his destiny, and to be baffled by the "dauntless seaman," Sir Sidney Smith, on the spot where the Order he had plundered had once succumbed to the Saracen. A contemporary account of the proceedings of the French gives a strong idea of their appetite for spoil: not only were the more precious metals confiscated wherever they were found, but even statues of bronze were haled from their pedestals and taken on board the fleet. Some of these valuables were retaken by the English, and either restored to the island or disposed of to the prize agents; but the chief part were sunk in Aboukir Bay. At length the patriotic irritation of the Maltese, who saw too late how grossly they had been deceived by intriguing agitators, came to a climax on an attempt to rifle the cathedral at Citta Vecchia, and an outbreak ensued, so general and formidable as to confine the French to the fortifications at Valetta, where the natives, with only intermittent assistance from England, reinforced by some Portuguese ships and Neapolitan regiments, blockaded them for more than two years, made several daring attempts to surprise the garrison, and finally compelled them to surrender. By the Treaty of Amiens, it was proposed to revive the Order of St John as possessors of the island; but the natives strongly opposed such a project, and in 1814 they succeeded in the accomplishment of their wish to have their country handed over to Great Britain as one of her dependencies.

At that time the chief rival of Great Britain as a claimant of Malta was Russia. It is now Italy and France who cast longing

eyes upon it as a post of vantage, and do their best to intrigue with every discontented party there. That there are such, is, unfortunately, not to be denied; although the natives in the main fully recognise the many advantages they possess under the rule of Great Britain, and appreciate the ample liberty they enjoy in religion and usages. But the labouring population are too numerous for the soil; and in spite of the most untiring industry, and of an enterprise which competes in the vegetable markets of Europe with much larger and more fertile lands, they are constantly hovering on the brink of famine, to which a season of drought, or an invasion of refugees from some scene of disturbance in the East, may at any moment unexpectedly consign them. Emigration has been suggested as a remedy, and is so far resorted to, that at every seaport on the adjacent coasts of Africa and Asia, a large Maltese population is engaged in those petty industries for which such places supply a field; but they all cherish an idea of returning to their beloved island; and too frequently their want of harmony with the Mussulman population around them is the cause at any political crisis of their suffering outrage or expulsion. Those who have ever visited that singular subterranean town, the Manderaggio in Valetta, originally scooped out to form a dry dock in the time of the knights, and now crammed with alleys to which the wynds of the Cowgate would be considered spacious, must wonder that the inhabitants are so healthy and contented. It was this phenomenon, by the by, which inspired one of Mr Plimsoll's most characteristic effusions—a pamphlet in which, in the spirit of the old popular dictum that Tenterden

steeple was the cause of Goodwin Sands, he promulgated the assertion that the "bread tax" or import duty upon corn in Malta was the cause of these underground dwellings, and charged upon the English Government the evil of this state of things. This is a fair specimen of the mischievous consequence of hasty and ill-grounded assumptions. The corn-duty in Malta is one of the oldest taxes in existence there, and its abolition has often been advocated by the English governors, but always vetoed by the representatives of the people themselves; while the reason which induces the boatmen and porters of Valetta to herd in the Manderaggio is the necessity of living near their work, obliging them to be content with such accommodation as can be found in a walled town incapable of extension. It has been suggested that a better remedy than emigration would be found in the increase of the Maltese contingent of the British army. If, instead of a few hundred artillerymen, we had a strong native brigade constantly on foreign service in our tropical stations, we should gain by the superior adaptation of the men to conditions which are detrimental to the health of English soldiers; while the congestion of the labour-market in the island would be relieved, and the soldiers themselves would return with habits of discipline and enlarged views, which would be beneficial to the general community. This scheme would likewise furnish a mode of getting at a class who are at present by no means a source of pride or strength either to the local or imperial Government—the educated young men of the middle rank of life, equivalent to our clerks and shop-assistants. Of these a large number every year leave the public seminaries qual-

ified for medicine or law, both which professions are terribly overstocked in the island. They feel themselves superior to mere handicraft and to trade, even were an opening to present itself; and they simply become loafers on the pavements and in the *cafés* of Valetta, from which, after a while, they cannot make up their minds to tear themselves, even when offered positions in the service of the English Government abroad. Quite recently two young men of considerable promise in their profession accepted posts under the English Government in foreign parts, and both, before the period for starting arrived, threw up their appointments.

If, however, it became the custom for their social superiors to take a term of foreign service, they would fall into the same habitude, and gradually be brought to look forward to such an incident as their natural career, instead of vegetating in a confined circle, exposed to the fascinations of intriguing emissaries of foreign Powers, or restless agitators of patriotic complexion. Malta is peculiarly liable to become the refuge of certain British subjects, who, having "left their country for their country's good," endeavour to do as much mischief as possible in their Adullam, and employ the press in propounding the wildest theories or ventilating the pettiest grievances. The half-educated youth of Malta (for what education is complete without experience of the world?) are ready victims of this style of adventurer, and adopt the jargon of the Continental Liberal as the symbol of their enlightenment. One of their greatest bugbears is the increase of English teaching in the schools; a movement for which the late Governor and his administrators

showed themselves most laudably anxious. At present the official language, where English is not used, is not Maltese but Italian; and this foreign tongue becomes, with a certain class, a shibboleth of disaffection. It is to be regretted, also, that this contracted view is fostered by many of the clergy, who, with gross ingratitude, forget that they enjoy privileges and immunities under English rule which in France or Italy would be denied them, and persist in posing as the representatives of a true Church, offended by the very presence of heretical interlopers. It is much to be hoped that the Government will steadily persevere in the introduction of the English language, in spite both of open opposition and covert discouragement; as there can be no question that it would not only strengthen the bond with Great Britain, but, by encouraging visits to this country on the part of Maltese, improve the standards of taste and intelligence which now prevail among the latter.

General Porter's book does not, of course, deal to any great extent with the modern condition of Malta, or even with its antiquarian aspect, apart from the period of the rule of the Grand Masters; but he inferentially adds another to the many testimonies of the value of the historical treasures for which England has made herself responsible, by her acceptance of the position once occupied by the Order of St John in Malta. That these traditions and relics are in some danger of being neglected is only too true. At home, although a spasmodic interest in them may be aroused at intervals by travellers like Lady Brassey, and *savants* like Professor Sayce, the feeling soon subsides, and we are content with a few specimens,

deposited in our own museums or arsenals, and leave the people of Malta to do very much as they list with the great bulk of the archæological treasures which are still in their original home: a very unsatisfactory mode of discharging our responsibility.

A melancholy spectacle of the little regard paid to literature is to be seen in the public library, rich in valuable works bequeathed by eminent members of the Order, and containing likewise a good modern collection of books of general information, for which an annual allowance is made from the Government estimates. The chairs in the great hall are occupied by urchins of ten or twelve, learning their lessons from dog's-eared primers, or amusing themselves with the engravings in illustrated newspapers, while adults are conspicuous by their absence. You are in search of some book, and learn that it has disappeared, or receive it in the form of a crumbling heap of dusty leaves, tied together with packthread, and honeycombed by the ravages of the *Anobium pertinax* and the *Acaris eruditus*, to say nothing of other varieties of the insect enemies of literature, which were described in an article in the 'Academy' about two years ago. Should you desire to see the museum of antiquities, you will be ushered into a series of dusky closets in the rear of the building, where the objects, some of them unique and priceless, are huddled together without arrangement or catalogue. This is to a great extent the result of the foolish parsimony of the English Government, who for many years provided a perfectly inadequate staff of custodians; but it is now in no small measure the *vis inertia* which opposes suggestions of improvement

made by the committee of management, even when originated and supported by native gentlemen of the highest culture and standing. The most practical of all these proposals was to procure the services of one of the higher officials of the British Museum to reorganise the whole collection, which might easily be done in the handsome building where it is at present located, were the best use made of the numerous apartments at the disposal of the Government ; but the cry of the Colonial Office for economy knocked the scheme on the head. Sir Penrose Julyan, in fact, with the best intentions, did the island a serious injury when he made his report upon her finances ; and there is no doubt that, had his recommendations been thoroughly carried out, irreparable injury would have been inflicted upon many of those remains of historical grandeur, which so ancient and wealthy a country as England should not hesitate to preserve in their in-

tegrity, even at some cost to the national exchequer.

There are few parts of the world so varied in antiquarian interest as Malta. The gigantic Phœnician temples, in size, number and state of preservation unequalled elsewhere ; the Roman villas and tombs ; the early Christian crypts and catacombs ; the fragments of the work of Norman builders during the Sicilian occupation ; and the gorgeous and lavish splendour in carving, painting, tapestry, and other adornments with which the knights decorated churches, palaces, and even hospitals, altogether make up a panorama of the world's architectural progress and decline. That England should add to these grand features is perhaps hardly to be expected ; but we may hope that the New Zealander of the future, on his way to view the ruins of London Bridge, will not find every trace of the Knights of Malta obliterated in their ancient stronghold by British utilitarianism.

A QUARTETTE OF ITALIAN NOVELISTS.

It is a favourite complaint in this country, a complaint which has assumed almost the shape of an axiom, that there is no such thing as a modern Italian literature; and since for some years past the study of that liquid language has grown unfashionable, for reasons only known to the fickle goddess of fashion, no contradictions have been put forth against a dictum that is both narrow-minded and erroneous. For while we who in this country still learn the language of the

"bel paese dove il si suona,"

are set to cut our linguistic teeth upon the classics, Petrarch, Dante, Ariosto; or are supplied, in the shape of lighter literature, with the equally classic romances of Manzoni, D'Azeglio, Grossi,—there has arisen with the unity of Italy, and the new hope, power, strength, that legitimate freedom and emancipation from the hateful Austrian yoke has given to the Italians, a virile and vigorous new school of writers, poets, dramatists, critics, novelists, whose very names are unknown in our country. It is therefore high time that we revised our views; and for this purpose we propose to introduce our readers to four novelists, who are, each in his sphere, the leading writers of modern Italy.

In making our selection, we have chiefly sought to find a representative of every school. From our dealing only with these four it must by no means be inferred that modern Italy does not own other writers as excellent in their way. Such a supposition would do great injustice to authors like Barrili, the prolific, the easy, amiable, versatile

raconteur, who spins forth romances treating of the prehistoric lake-dweller and the gilded youth of modern Genoa, the Queen of Sheba and Roman drawing-rooms; to Enrico Castelnovo, the graceful writer of short humorous scenes from everyday life; to Capuana, the unflinching, powerful, at times even brutal realist; to De Amicis, the traveller, the laudator of military life and the virtues of the house of Savoy; to Rovetta, whose '*Mater Dolorosa*,' a tale of modern life, has secured him at one bound a foremost place; to Camillo Boito, with his short strong studies that blend modern realism with bygone romanticism; to Caccianiga, the writer of tendency romances that protest against the current Radical inclination in Italian politics; to D'Annunzio, the hot-passioned Neapolitan; to De Zerbi, to Petrucci della Gattina, to De Renzis, and others too many to enumerate. Nor must we forget the ladies who are taking so honourable a place in current literature, where, beside the two of whom we shall speak, G. Pierantonio Mancini, Bruno Sperani, Emma Perodi, Ida Baccini, have made their mark.

The reason why novel-writing, in the modern sense, has been later to blossom in Italy than in other cultured European States, must be sought in yet one other cause beside the political, and that is, the nature of the Italian written language, which was not that spoken of the people, and was therefore ill adapted as a vehicle in which to convey a record of their doings. It is, indeed, only quite recently, with the unity of Italy, the introduction

of compulsory education, and universal military service, that Italian—i. e., Tuscan—is being learned and spoken throughout the peninsula. Until then each province, almost each town, had its own dialect, which in some cases so nearly assumed the proportions of a language that the speaker of Zanese—that is to say, Genoese, with its Arab and Spanish affinities—would not understand the speaker of, say, Sardinian, the nearest survival to ancient Latin yet spoken on the globe. To this day it is only in Tuscany that Italian is the common speech. For the benefit of the stranger or visitor from other parts of Italy, the inmates of a city will speak Italian; but it often comes with difficulty from their lips, and when left alone they relapse into their familiar native dialect. The final disappearance of this peculiarity is of course a mere question of time, probably of but one generation. Still the novelist has had to reckon with this factor, and has been hampered by it. If not born a Tuscan, he often himself commanded the Italian language with difficulty; and hence has arisen a certain stiffness and angularity of style peculiarly fatal when it appears in fictitious literature, whose mechanism, so to speak, should above all run smoothly and imperceptibly. A leading Italian author told a friend of ours that to this day he never ventures to write a page without turning to his 'Fanfani' (the Italian Stormonth) to see if he may use a word or not. Now Fanfani, no doubt, is somewhat of a purist, and the very newest contemporary writers of Italy refer to him but little, to judge from the Gallicisms and neologisms they permit themselves. On the other hand, it would be well if they remembered that here,

as elsewhere, there is a middle path; and that if the diction sanctioned by the Crusca, with its academic niceties, wanted flexibility, and made the language one which it was hard for a novelist to handle and mould to his requirements, the laxity and liberties they permit themselves with the ancient and classic tongue of the peninsula are yet more to be deprecated, and will, unless a proper check is imposed, end in effacing some of its finest characteristics. It was Manzoni, himself a Lombard, who among moderns, first used the Tuscan language in which to clothe his romance; and to this circumstance, as much as to its excellence, the sensation it created, the fame it preserves, is due. Its publication marks an epoch. The spoken language was here first employed in written form; it was demonstrated, and interestingly, attractively demonstrated, that printed language need not necessarily walk upon stilts, a form of progression peculiarly ill adapted to fiction that deals with men and women as they live and move in daily life, not men and women powdered, painted, and "made up" for masquerading.

It was, no doubt, the pressing reality of political events that recalled the Italian writers from the arena of past ages to the events of our own day; and for some time they were more anxious to arouse high-souled and patriotic sentiments than to write for the sake of pure literature. As the political horizon lightened, the novelists found themselves uncertain whither to turn for example, and whence to choose their themes. Some looked to France for models, others to England, some to both; and among those who did the latter was Salvatore Farina, at this day unhesitatingly pronounced the head

of living Italian novelists—a writer who may be regarded as a lineal descendant in Apollo from Manzoni, and who has bridged the cleft 'twixt the old school and the new. Farina does not do homage to any of the fashionable tendencies; he is neither a realist nor a sensationalist; he does not desire to be cramped by the limits of any school. His sphere of observation is the quiet uneventful life of average mortals; no impossible heroes and heroines his; no sensations, no startling adventures or complications, are found in his dramas. Everyday life is the material with which he rears his edifices—the home, the family, his domain. Humdrum some would perhaps disdainfully call the surroundings in which he loves to move, and wherein he is at his best; but from these humdrum materials he extracts poetry, and it is the very charm of his works that he thus appeals to all mankind; for when everything is said and done, most of our lives are humdrum, and the *grande passion*, the terrible incidents beloved of the romantic school of novelists are so rare as to be false to real life. That Farina makes us see the poetical side of everyday existence is his grand merit, his talent. Quiet domestic love, the material that makes up our daily life, whose expression in literature is as new as it is difficult, is his best inspiration; the 'painting of a love so different from that sung by Dante and Petrarch, so different from that wild motiveless infatuation of the French romanticists, or of our English Broughton school. Farina's literary and individual physiognomy must be studied in his domestic novels, where author and writer will be found identical. The reason for this can be discovered in the very simple course of his own existence. He himself says—"My

artistic life and my domestic life fuse themselves one with another."

Born at Sorso (January 10, 1846), in Sardinia, he was educated for the law. On attaining his degree he married. "Before marrying," he says, "I was no artist, I only dreamed of art. Scarcely married, however, I went to Milan, 'cut' my law books to dedicate myself to literature, or rather to become a novelist. Perhaps my sole merit consists in this, that I only desired to be a novelist and a father, nothing more." This marriage, with a widow some years his senior, brought the sunshine of domestic happiness into the young man's life, ere ever he could have suffered from its lack, and thus prevented him from unworthy squandering of his freshest feelings. His wife, who was to him, in his own words, "*inspiratrice*, friend, sister, mother, all," was taken from him two years ago, and since her death Farina's pen has been idle. He will resume it, no doubt, but we should not be surprised if he entered a new groove. It is not sorrow and sickness only that keeps him silent just now, it is also perplexity at the direction literature has quite recently taken in Italy. In a letter on this theme he writes to us:—

"To-day there is *en vogue* the quarter of an hour of sensuous sensation in all art, and literature gives the tone. It will pass, let us hope, for the sake of all those who besides colour see form, who besides sensuous sensation enjoy sentiment, who adore beautiful truth more than truths crude and rude. Truth is one of the conquests of modern art, and it is well; but we must not interpret this conception *alla diavola*, as it is done to-day in order to deny salvation to so many good and lovely things that have the sole defect of not being within the reach of the comprehension of the vulgar."

His artistic *Credo*, he says is,

"I have seen the ugly, and am enamoured of the beautiful." His tolerant scepticism, or a melancholy temperament, and not optimism, is, according to himself, the cause of his disinclination to search the soul of the wicked. Wickedness has no attraction for him, and he flees from it even in his books. Nor do the bad seem to him as artistic as the good, and still less so than the weak.

"I certainly avoid them," he owns, "and this because a person must live with me for months and months, so to speak, day and night, before I can take him for a type of a novel. . . . I admit that in the balance of humanity wickedness may perhaps preponderate; but never mind, the good is there too, and is just as true as the bad, and artistically its equal. And there is something even better, and that is to seek the good in this bad; and that is my favourite occupation, to go in quest of a human soul."

We have quoted so largely from the writer's own words because, with the sure self-criticism of the true artist, he has better and more succinctly than we could, sketched the amiable personality of himself and his works. Equally just is his *resume* of his books.

"I began my career," (1869), he says, "with a very mediocre novel, 'Due Amori,' followed by one that was not worth more, 'Un Segreto.' [Of these he has never permitted a reprint.] Then followed a romance, in which, according to my opinion, and also according to the opinion of the critics, there was a warm description of the human heart, 'Il Romanzo d'un Vedovo.' But my first true success was achieved by 'Il Tesoro di Donnina,' and this was followed by others, written with ever-increasing security of touch."

The fact was, that these earliest stories were written in Farina's first style—a style he happily soon abandoned. The artist had not

yet found his own groove, and was attempting to walk in those trace by the French Bohemian school—grooves totally unsuited to his nature and mode of regarding life. Stories dealing with illicit love, with shipwrecked happiness owing to the fascinations of those sirens rarely found outside the covers of a book, ill suited his genius; and Farina well understood the limits of his capacities when he ceased depicting such wretched personages as Castelli the widower, and Signora Albruzzi the enchantress. The only character that has a true ring is that of Letitia, the injured wife, a noble, congenial figure.

In 'Tesoro di Donnina' (1873), Farina strikes his own keynote, and proves that the glad rather than the shady sides of human life are best suited to his pencil. Here we find the encomium of pure family life that distinguishes him, the high ethical standard that never defeats its purpose by assuming a didactic garb. The book earned for Farina the title of an Italian Dickens, one of those unfortunate designations that cling to a man, and are so apt to mislead. Not but what the name in itself is honourable: but it is a cheap form of criticism to call every humorist a Dickens, and in the case of these two men the nature of the humour is most diverse. It only has this common ground that in both cases it springs from a large warm heart that loves its fellow-men; but while Dickens dwells on the darker, sterner side of humanity, or falls into caricature when he deals with the simple-natured good, the Italian skims the surface more lightly and gracefully, and with his inborn native sense of beauty and form avoids contrasts that are too sharp, faults of taste that spring from those roistering animal spirits that are

peculiar to a Northerner. In the same manner that reflection in an Italian does not extinguish *naïveté* or sink into melancholy, so humour does not degenerate into horse-play or exaggeration. The nature of Farina's humour is subtle and delicate. He can be ironical, too, but his irony is never scathing. The background of 'Tesoro di Donnina' is certainly somewhat sombre, for the scene of action is a lunatic asylum, and it is here the hero and heroine meet and seal their loves. The style is still a little stiff; there are crudities of expression, and too many minor incidents to be artistically complete.

But in 'Amore Bendato' the finished artist steps forth. It is a charming story, reflecting all the author's deepest qualities—a very masterpiece of heart-analysis. It treats of a young couple that cannot find the right domestic groove. Leonardo has married because it is the proper thing for a wealthy man, and he likes his little wife well enough, but he cannot for her sake renounce all his easy bachelor ways, his clubs, his meetings with male friends. Ernesta, who has a deeper nature, longs to be more to him than a toy, and fails to find contentment in her empty luxurious house. They separate: he travels, she stays at home, and a would-be comforter soon turns up in the form of the family doctor, Leonardo's friend. Here would be the moment for the ordinary French or Italian novelist to introduce an incident after 'the vulgar hackneyed type. Not so with Farina. Ernesta listens with indifferent curiosity to Agenore's materialistic and easy-going views of existence; and though he has laid a careful plan of battle to entrap the love-thirsting woman, she in no wise plays into his hands, though there is danger

that, from sheer *désœuvrement*, she may yield. Things are at this point when Leonardo, whose eyesight has suffered from the beginning, suddenly returns home stone-blind. Ernesta at once remembers her duties; she tends him with wifely devotion; and during his long illness and ultimate recovery of sight, love, nearly extinct in her breast, scarcely awakened in his, comes to full bloom and blossom. With regained vision, Leonardo takes a new view of life and its duties; and we know that henceforth they will be a happy couple. Very delicately is the history of this revival of love unrolled before our eyes: her mere submission to duty in the first instance, then her gradual discovery that existence has now a purpose—she must be his eyes, his support, his world—then the joy that the discovery gives her,—all this before an operation has restored the hope of renewed vision. On his part, there is a timidity towards his fair young wife,—a sense of undeservedness of her favours, a fear lest his new sense of leaning upon her, his desire to have her about him, be merely an expression of his egotism that now needs such a devoted nurse. Subtly and skilfully Agenore is made to act the part of Cupid's agent both on husband and wife; and with delicious irony he is happily released out of the crooked position into which he has put himself, by a betrothal, thanks to Ernesta's feminine wiles, to one of her cousins who has long sighed after the doctor as a spouse. Ernesta chooses to pretend that all his wooing of her has been vicarious, and so the whole concludes merrily and without an inharmonious note. The book is delicate in idea and treatment, and is a gem of the first water. It was fol-

lowed by four short stories collected in a volume, of which 'La Famiglia del Signor Onorato' gives a picture of family happiness, though the happiness here is one whose poetic charm lies in resignation. A brother and sister make to themselves a family that has not come to them in the ordinary way, by the care of orphaned children. "Fante di Picche" shows us a light-natured lad, whom a true love saves from gambling destruction. It is a delicate psychological humoresque, containing some delicious figures, such as Uncle Martin, the youth's guardian and preserver. "Una separazione di letto e di mensa" is a tenderly treated psychological problem,—an old couple of fifty-five years' standing, who have shared joy and sorrow together, and yet often fall out so seriously that they vow to separate. Of course they are always reconciled again,—at last by a young couple, who thus find their own happiness; and in the end, when she dies, he cannot outlive his grief, and a few hours after they find him dead, with a smile on his face that seemed to say, "Even death has not been able to separate us." Farina is never happier than in these little *genre* pictures, taken from common life, which by his amiable humour, his inclination to look at the bright side, his rich faith in the ultimate triumph of good, he lifts into an ideal sphere. Sketched with a light hand, and full of happy touches, is also the humoresque "Fra le corde d'un Contrabasso," a character-study of the various manifestations of the great passion, to which we must all succumb, as it shows itself in the love of a father and two sons, one a grown man, the other a cub, to a bewitching young girl, who has lost her heart to the elder son,

who, in his turn, is so absorbed in music, that at first he knows nothing of his feelings.

We must not linger over these shorter tales, and can only mention "Il Signor Io," a masterly sketch, showing how egotism must be vanquished ere true happiness can be found; "Un Tiranno ai bagni di Mare," and "Della Spuma del Mare," a story of artistic life—three touching, graceful, airy sketches, which, under a light surface, cover the very depths of the human heart, though the hero of the latter is no one more mighty than "the celebrated Bartolomeo Profumo," who deems himself an artist, because many a time at the Scala in Milan he has played the part of first wave in the representation of an agitated sea. Though, with one exception, Farina is at his happiest in these shorter tales, we must speak of his longer and more ambitious works. Of these, 'Capelli Biondi,' belongs to the vicious French school, and requires no comment; but in 'Ora Nascosto,' a transcript from middle-class Italian life, he is upon his own ground. The story in itself is nothing, the working out of the characters is everything, and gives Farina's brain and tender heart full play to develop all their gentleness. His genial humour would almost run riot in this novel if the Southerner's fine native taste did not hold it in check. In 'Amore ha cent'occhi,' the author's longest work, there is the same love for humanity, the same sympathetic desire to bring to light the hidden gold that is buried, often deeply buried, in every human breast. The scene in this case is laid in Farina's native isle, and gives him opportunity to paint customs that strike us as quite Homeric in their naïve simplicity. But taken as a whole, the work fails artistically;

it is somewhat disjointed—now too prolix, now too concise.

In truth, Farina, when he ventures on longer works, is not at his best. His scaffolding is indifferently constructed and proportioned, works *à longue haleine* seem ill-suited to his genius. And this reproach, curiously enough, touches most of the modern Italian writers, who are excellent in short sketches and tales. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that *feuilleton* literature is chiefly required from them, and hence they have learnt to tell tales, as it were by lightning, but understand less well the art of slowly developing their characters and situations. In little literary *genre* pictures of daily life they are certainly 'at this moment without rivals'; and we in England could learn much from them, for with us short tales are not our strong point. Farina's masterpiece, 'Mio Figlio,' though a long work, is in reality a cycle of novelettes, all dealing with the same family, but each sketch complete in itself. Farina has never surpassed this book, and it seems to us unlikely that he will do so. All the best elements of his amiable muse are united here—his light-hearted philosophy, his wholesome emotion, his fine observation. It is a prose poem of family life, an epic of home joys and loves, a series of *tableaux vivants* taken *au vif* from the domestic hearth. In a series of nine sketches the lawyer Placide, in whom we may recognise many little traits of resemblance with the author, relates the history of his son, from before his birth to his marriage. Each story contains a finished picture of a particular stage of family life, and as a whole they enclose the entire compass of an ordinary human life reflected in the fortunes of one family. Written from the heart, it appeals to the

heart, and its very simplicity and everyday theme lend it a typical character. We regret that exigencies of space prevent us from quoting a few scenes from this work, which, we fear, can never be translated into English,—for one reason, because its *naïve*, innocent, child-like outspokenness—an outspokenness characteristically Italian, that thinks and means no harm—is foreign to our mode of thought, and would be misinterpreted here; and for another, because its charm of language—suave, caressing, musical, at times almost rhythmical—would entirely evaporate in translation into our incognate speech.

Idealist and Puritan, so some of his critics sum up Farina, and especially those who contrast him with his great Sicilian contemporary, Verga, a naturalist of the first water, though of the purest type,—one who does not grovel in dirt for dirt's own sake, but who puts down accurately what he sees before him. His eyes wear no spectacles, either rose-coloured or black. He is an artist who has struck out his own paths in lieu of walking in those of others.

But we must hasten at once to say that there are two Vergas, the one as conventional and trivial as the other is 'original and racy,—the one who seeks his themes in the higher social classes, with whom he has clearly no sympathies, and whom he only seems to know from the corrupt and artificial side; the other, the Sicilian, who knows intimately, loves well, his compatriot peasants, the fishermen that ply their precarious trade upon its classic shores. Verga's society novels have no specifically Italian character; They deal with those stock-in-trade novelistic puppets that might live in any land or clime; and though here and there the master-hand is felt, they do

not as a whole rise above the average; and had not the Sicilian author awoke, we doubt if the world in general would ever have cared to hear of Verga. We will at once dismiss these novels, to leave ourselves space for the more worthy emanations of his genius. They are named respectively 'Eros,' 'Eva,' 'Tigre Reale,' 'Il Marito di Elena,' stories of ballet-dancers, forsaken or faithless wives, untrue or deceived husbands. In a fine preface to 'Eva,' Verga appears to anticipate the objections that will come from serious critics.

"Do not," he writes, "condemn the art that is the manifestation of your tastes. The enamoured Greeks left us the statue of Venus; we shall leave the lithographed *cancan* on our match-boxes. Do not let us even discuss about proportion: art then was a civilisation; to-day it is not only a luxury, but the luxury of the idle. Civilisation is wellbeing; and at its foundation, when it is exclusive, as to-day, you will find nothing else, if you have the courage and truth to be logical, but material enjoyment. In all the *seriousness* with which we are invaded, and in our antipathy for all that is not positive—let us put there also idle art—there is at least nothing but the table and woman. We live in an atmosphere of companies and industrial enterprises, and the fever of enjoyment is the exuberance of that life. Do not accuse art, whose only fault is that it has more heart than you, and that it weeps for you the pains of your pleasures. Do not preach morality, you who only have enough of it to close your eyes upon the spectacle of the miseries you create,—you who marvel that others can leave their hearts and honour where you only leave your purse,—you who let your varnished shoes creak gaily where bitter ebriety plays the fool, or where groan the unknown pains which art gathers up and throws into your face."

Verga's 'Apologia' is eloquent and true, but he pleads the cause

of the weak and miserable far more usefully when he moves away from perfumed boudoirs and their wearisomely same and colourless inmates, and takes us instead to the field and mountains of the South, striking at once the natural note here lacking. And where could a writer find more hidden treasures than amid the many provinces of Italy, in which, from political divisions, speech and customs have developed independently? A rich harvest lies here waiting to be gleaned, and it is the merit of modern Italian writers, and at their head Giovanni Verga, that they have recognised this, and are busy gathering their treasures.

Verga, as contrasted with Farina, is an objective rather than a subjective writer. In every page of the Sardinian's works we recognise his amiable personality; while Verga is reserved, and stands outside his books. Little, too, is known of his life, except that he was born in Catania, 1840; that he spent a portion of his youth in Florence and Milan, where he wrote his first society novels; that he returned to Catania, where he experienced grievous family losses; and that for some years past he has fixed his abode in Milan. "But my best inspirations," he says very truly, "come thence where I passed my childhood and early youth." His first book (1873) was 'La Storia di una Capinera,' a rather sentimental tale, narrating the history of a young girl destined against her will to a convent life, which pours out her woes and struggles, her desires after freedom, happiness, and love, in a series of letters to a friend. Her mental conflicts end in madness; and the struggle between the mighty voices of nature and of a false, pharisaical morality, are told with pathological truth, although

the impression left by the whole is sickly.

With 'Nedda,' a Sicilian sketch, Verga stepped forth strong and fully equipped. All maudlin sentimentality had vanished; we have here to do with a writer who has felt the pulse of the peasants, and puts their life before us in all its pathos; lives heroic within their small sphere, lives sordid and squalid amid a landscape of exquisite beauty, lives fever-stricken and cruel amid the most gracious conditions of nature; men and women whose veins would seem to run lava, as though the fiery mountain, beneath whose shade they dwell, had poured its vitals into their frames. 'Nedda,' within its short compass, is a village tragedy of great power, though its personages are but a miserably poor young girl, of hot, strong feelings, with an instinctive fear of temptation—her loutish, but true-hearted lover, with his awkward modes of wooing—a narrow-souled priest, a cruel world that judges the fallen as harshly in a hamlet as in a metropolis, the good-natured Uncle Giovanni, generous as only the poor know how,—all figures that stand forth from the sun-gilded Sicilian background, etched upon our memories for ever. 'Vita dei Campi,' 'Per le vie,' 'Novelle,' 'Novelle rusticane,' are the various titles under which Verga has collected his rustic tales. All are distinguished by a conscientious study of truth, the exclusion of any literary artifices, and a conciseness and intensity of style which says in ten words what others would say in a hundred, curiously at variance with our notion of Southern volubility. But under this reticence we feel the author's earnestness. He resembles one of his own heroes, Alfio, who speaks tranquilly while he has

a tempest raging in his breast. His studies of Sicilian life, transcribed from amid the villages and old ruined houses of the coast, on the plains of Catania, have not only an artistic but a social value, and may in time be quoted as what, according to a current phrase, is known as "human documents," when the modern history of Italy is written. These stories have the grace of Mérimée's Corsican novellistes, the vigour and virgin-soil freshness of Bret Harte's 'Tales of the Argonauts.' Like Bret Harte, Verga has stepped among the people and studied human passions there, where conventionalities do not quench their full strength, and where they often manifest themselves in their entire animal unreasoning character. The dominant purpose of his tales may be summed up as the war of the rich and wicked against the poor and simple, a warfare in which the poor and simple ever succumb; as how can they resist law, prejudices, religion,—in a word, all the social organisation which the powerful use as their instruments of oppression? He tells the sad tale calmly, with a coldness that might seem irony, if we did not ask ourselves, would he speak at all had he not been deeply touched? He graves his etching stylus into the very marrow and veins of the people; but he is not therefore cruel, or immoral, or biassed. There is an innate love of truth in the life-studies he has made on the sphinx of humanity. They are mostly sombre, as might be expected. The life of the poor hard-worked peasant is not gay and careless, as the believer in Arcadia would have us think; Arcadia that has never existed out of the pages of poets and Dresden china—and 'Rosso Mapelo,' 'Jeli il Pastore,' 'Cavalleria Rusticana,' 'La Lupa,' are

not gay reading. This may be pastoral life—no doubt it is; but it is not what we have been taught to understand by that term. A favourite theme that recurs, and is probably but too true in real Sicilian life, is that treated in 'Jeli,' where a woman succeeds in deluding her husband until at last, his suspicions confirmed, his hot Southern blood aroused, his docility changes to a tiger's fury, and, regardless of consequences, instinctively, instantaneously, he murders the culprits. The impressionism that reigns in modern Italian art finds its reflection also in literature. As a piece of word-painting, of word-impressionism, Verga's sketch 'Malaria,' is notable. The heavy terrible curse that hangs over landscape and population, is here positively put into words. Masterly, also, are two pendant sketches, 'Cos' è il re?' and 'Libertà,' in which he reproduces with photographic exactitude the ideas concerning legitimate royalty and freedom as they exist in the heads of the people. The old monarchy, behind which ever stood the executioner, and which yet, nevertheless, exerted its fascination, and occasionally let gold pieces fly, contrasted with much vaunted liberty. What has this liberty given to the people—this hotly desired liberty? A wild frenzy has seized the populace; they cool their ardour upon the rich, they burn, plunder, rob. Calm returns; every one goes back to his occupations. The *Galantuomini* cannot till the land with their own hands, and the poor people cannot live without the *Galantuomini*. So they make peace one with another. Then the lawsuits and the galleys. "Oh why? And when not even for one day a foot of earth is my own. And they had told me freedom had come!" In a word, in his rustic tales, Verga

treats of a world turning upon rusty hinges, which yet are very strong, and exert no inconsiderable influence. In 'Per le vie' he gives a number of sketches of the city life of the poor; lives void of variety, from whose monotony, especially for the women, there is no escape save by disgrace and fall. They are all sad, some, like 'Il Canarino del No. 15,' deeply pathetic. The caged canary is a paralysed girl, whose outlook on life is limited by the tiny view across the narrow street. Nearly all the girls go to the bad, and we can scarcely wonder, can certainly not blame. Their ethical sense is rudimentary, their inborn southern need of life's pleasures very strong. It is a fact worth notice, that throughout the fathers are more pained by their daughters' fall than the mothers. Though the material of each narrative is slender, the narratives themselves make a strong impression on the mind.

But I have still to speak of Verga's masterpiece, 'I Malavoglia.' The modern social romance, taken out of the innermost life of a people, has here been first created for Italy; and it is no exaggeration when a leading Italian critic places its author beside Manzoni on this account. 'I Malavoglia' is the first, and as yet only published, portion of a series, 'I Vinti' (The Vanquished). The leading idea, according to Verga's own words, is

"an earnest, dispassionate study of the probable birth and development, in the most humble conditions of life, of a dark, vague, restless desire after a better material condition. As this desire in man is gradually satisfied, there comes the greed of wealth, which I propose to treat in a burgher type and in a provincial city, in 'Maestro Don Gesualdo.' Afterwards it becomes aristocratic vanity in the 'Duchessa di Leyra,' ambition in 'Onorevole Scipione,' to arrive at last at the

'Uomo di lusso,' who contains within himself all these desires, wishes, vanities, comprehending them, suffering under them, and devoured by them. All these are so many vanquished whom the current of the struggle for existence has thrown out upon the shore. The fatal, restless, often weary, feverish way, trodden of humanity to conquer progress, is magnificent in its results, seen as a whole and from a distance. In the glorious light it sheds about it, are overshadowed the agitations, the desires, the egoism; all the passions, all the vices that are transformed into virtues; all the weaknesses that assist the great labour; all the contradictions from whose attrition develops the light of truth. The grand result for humanity covers all that is mean and petty in the private interests that produce it—nay almost justifies them as needful means to stimulate the activity of the individual that is unconsciously working for the benefit of the whole. . . . Only the observer, though himself torn along by the current, has the right to interest himself for the weak who are left behind by the stream; for the weary who let the waves close over them to end more quickly; for the vanquished who raise their arms despairingly and bow their heads under the brutal tread of those that march over them, the conquerors of to-day, themselves pressing on recklessly, eager to arrive, and who will, on their part, be overtaken to-morrow. . . . Whoever observes this spectacle has no right to judge it; it is much already if he succeeds in dragging himself for a moment outside the camp of struggle, to study it without passion, and to reproduce the scene exactly, with its proper colouring, so as to give the representation of reality as it has been or should be."

This idea of a plan running throughout his novel series has, of course led to a comparison of Verga with Zola's 'Rougon Makart,' and it is not improbable that the first impetus may have come thence. But Verga differs essentially from his French colleague in that it is not blind, cruel, hereditary neces-

sity, or outward accident, that impels his actors, but rather an ethical power that works unconsciously behind their actions. We only trust that Verga may finish his series, and not—like his Gallician contemporary, Sacher Masoch, who also planned to tell the whole tragedy of life in a cycle of tales—find himself tempted aside from his Herculean path by the invitations of editors to furnish them with short tales, chips from his workshop,—chips that seem to have frittered away the building material destined for the main edifice. We note with regret no announcement of 'Don Gesualdo' and a number of *feuilleton* stories weekly appearing in the Italian press. It is true 'I Malavoglia' has not met in Italy with the popularity its merits deserve. It is not light reading—indeed the first hundred pages are decidedly heavy; but the persevering reader will find himself rewarded, and occasionally diverted too, though the general tendency is mournful. *Malavoglia* is the name, or rather the nickname, of a Sicilian fisherman family, whose fortunes the author follows in great detail, and around whom are grouped the entire population of the hamlet—some thirty persons. We get a little confused at first, until we are thoroughly acquainted with these various men and women,—more or less insignificant, and yet each a character—a struggling, suffering, human soul. How admirably is the vacuity, the insipidity of rural life depicted, with its sterile heroisms, its disdain for luckless virtue, its griefs, no less profound than their causes seem puerile to our larger capacities for action! The hero—if the book has a hero—is the younger 'Ntoni, who has vaguely heard of the "new ideas" that have fallen with him on fruitful ground. He, too, wants

to become rich, easily, without exertion. His father listens to his harangues, opens his eyes wide, scratches his head thoughtfully, and asks : " Rich ! and what shall we do when we are rich ? " ' Ntoni, too, scratched his head, and began to think what they would do. " We shall do as the others do," he said at last. " We shall do nothing. We shall be in the town and do nothing, like the rich, and eat meat every day and white bread." This is the keynote to the situation, needless to say that it ends badly—that ' Ntoni sinks lower and lower into degradation, drawing his whole family after him into ruin. Their convulsive struggles to keep themselves upright, their vain efforts to fight against the tide that is slowly but surely creeping onwards to overwhelm them at last, form deeply pathetic reading.

Verga's masterpiece is essentially a creation of our modern form of philosophical thought, an outcome of Darwinism. The difference between contemporary novels and those of the epoch immediately preceding ours might almost be roughly defined as in their case the endeavour to paint life as we should like it to be, and in ours a photographically true picture of existence as it is. It must not, however, be inferred that Verga's tales are purely painful reading. Cicero already has observed that a Sicilian is never so miserable as to be unable to utter a *bon mot*, and Verga is too faithful an observer not to introduce this feature. His peasants possess wit and shrewd repartee, and from the modern dweller in the land we better understand the ancient. Like the ancient inhabitants, so the moderns too delight in rural life ; and for this cause, in the same way, that classic bucolic poetry originated in Sicily, the

modern Italian rustic novelette has arisen thence.

One word as to Verga's language. In dealing with Sicilians he had special difficulties to overcome, for the dialect of the island is not understood out of its borders. So there remained nothing for it but to get out of the dilemma as best he could, if he would be read by all Italy, and make his people talk Tuscan. He has so happily blended this with characteristic Sicilian expressions and technical terms, that the origin of his people is never forgotten, while their language is made comprehensible to all. The success of his novels is his best defence towards those who have blamed him for this step.

" *La petite Sand Italienne*," such is the complimentary title given to Matilde Serao by a French critic ; and with vast differences there are certainly also analogies between these writers, though Matilde Serao is too much as yet upon the threshold of her career for us to say in what direction it may still develop. Among the women writers of contemporary Italy she undoubtedly takes the leading place for originality and boldness, for subtle grace and accurate observation. Further, although she has clearly gone to school among the French and studied carefully the modern realists, she has retained the national flavour, so that by no possibility could the scenes of her stories be laid elsewhere than in hot-passioned, imaginative, sensuously beautiful Southern Italy. Matilde Serao is the best exponent of the new literary movement that takes its birth at Naples, — a movement that has been reproached, and not unjustly, with regarding life too exclusively from the sensuous and emotional side. As a woman, Matilde Serao naturally inclines to these tendencies ;

on the other hand, she has a virile firmness, and unflinching directness of touch and purpose which, combined in one person, gives her work quite a unique character and charm. She is truly a Southerner. Her mother was a Greek, descended from the Princes Scanavy, who gave emperors to Trebizond; and she herself was born at Patras, so that Italian is to her a learned language. It is from her mother that she has gained all she knows; for she was lazy in studying, preferring reading to steady application. Her father was a Neapolitan exile, who only returned to his native town in 1860, when Matilde was twelve years old. At quite an early age she began to write, and was only seventeen when her first short tale was published—'Opale,' an ingenuous spontaneous manifestation of a fresh and potent talent. It made some stir, and De Zerbi, then editor of the Neapolitan 'Piccolo,' offered her work upon his journal. Her fertility and vivacity, the facility with which she could turn her hand to any style of writing,—now short tales, now impressionist sketches of changing and transient scenes; now criticisms of art and literature; now records of balls and operas; now even Lenten sermons, composed with exquisite *verve* and wit,—made the world fear lest the need of immediate gains, and the clamourings of editors, should cause this gifted woman to fritter her talents in ephemeral work. Happily these fears were not realised; and in 1881, and again in 1883, she gave to the world two long romances, on which her future fame will surely rest. She has also collected into volumes such of her shorter tales and sketches as she has judged worthy of continued life. Of these 'Dal Vero,' a series of tales treating mostly of the

higher fashionable life of Rome and Naples, is distinguished by great freshness of manner and elaborate analysis of motive and character. Here all her dramatic presentment, her boldness, her caustic power have full play. 'Le Leggende Napoletane' are described by herself as "a book of imagination and dreams," in which she allows her impressionable nature full play; a monument, a house, a name, a coat-of-arms will stimulate her fancy, and set her weaving stories, half fact, half fiction, in which a strong poetic vein makes itself evident—a vein that saved her tales from sinking into the depths of naturalism. Spontaneity distinguishes these sketches, whose style is sometimes too apparently *recherché*; but this with her springs rather from exceptional sensibility than from conscious pursuit of unusual expressions. She admits that her art is vivified by an entirely feminine sentiment of sympathy—a fact strongly felt in 'Piccolo Anime,' which is devoted wholly to children, but written for grown people, in which she treats of every variety of child that has come into her way, giving us a picture of their little mental lives, with their precocious sensibility, their rapid intuitions, their nervous irritability; their instinctive sympathies and unreasoned antipathies; their joys and sufferings,—a book, in short, as charming and varied as children and child-life.

Matilde Serao is, before all else, a master of miniature-painting after the Dutch style, though her tendencies are modelled upon the stern French realistic pattern. She permits herself no pathos, no sentiment in expression, though she has both in feeling—she is almost convulsively objective; and though her two novels are in parts inclined to lengthiness, she neverthe-

less permits herself no episodic divagations, but proceeds to tell her tale simply, minutely, directly. Its pathos, if there is to be such, must be supplied by the reader out of the theme put before him. She paints life as it is, not merely the exterior of a small burgher or arid aristocratic existence, not only the characteristic conditions of Italian society, but the conditions that go on in the human soul, putting them forward in their true light, and showing how these often arise from mere chance circumstances. She is absolutely unprejudiced, and handles all manner of questions with judicial impartiality, but she is not on this account immoral. On the contrary, she shows plainly the contradictions and errors into which man falls when he leaves the straight path of virtue. Hence her stories are better than many a sermon—are better than those moral tales in which the author wags his mentor finger as he paces by the side of the reader. Hers is the very essence of modern romance-writing, that overlooks nothing and indicates all, making all mental phases of equal importance, between whose lines every one can read out something analogous to his own life. She is one of the microscopic writers who put their instrument relentlessly over all things, and who would succeed in making the mental life of even an amœba interesting. Her powers of minute analysis, her vivisection of quivering human hearts, showed its full mastery in ‘Cuore Infermo,’ her first long novel. The groundwork of the tale is simple. It is the intimate history of a husband, Duke Marcello di Sangiorgio, and his wife Beatrice, or perhaps, more correctly speaking, only of his wife, since his life is merely that which she makes it. They both belong

to the aristocracy of Naples, a society which, in its corruption, frivolity, and decadence is painted with a master-hand. Masterly, too, are the scenes introduced, such as a first night at the San Carlo, the ceremonials of a high-life wedding. The pair have been married by *convenance*, but it so happens that he is ardently in love with her, and this at once puts her on her guard. She is cold to him, keeps him at a distance, responds to his transports of love with such apparent indifference, that at last she drives him to seek distractions elsewhere, though he never for a moment wavers in his affection for her. She is an enigma to us, and on that account rather antipathetic, until we get the key to the mystery in a letter to her father, who has interceded with her on Marcello’s behalf. Her mother, it seems, died of heart-complaint. She knows it, and is resolved that she, for her part, will not die of this disease.

“My father,” she writes, “I do not wish to have the heart of my mother. I desire to live long. As I live, life pleases me. I shudder at the thought of death, of the grave, the darkness, the cold. I desire to live, I repeat. I assumed as a mere garb this appearance of boldness which every one thinks is indifference, and I have had so much need of it that it has become my character. So much the better. Call it egotism. I do not deny it. I will not make one step, one gesture, to abandon my safeguard; I do not understand sacrifices, abnegation. You yourself have said it; I have not the heart of my mother. If only it were true that there is no connection between the physical and the moral heart! If the germ of the disease is in me, I will not voluntarily give it the faculty to break out; I will not love, I will not be disquieted, anxious, jealous. I will not suffocate my griefs and my lamentations. If evil fortune has chosen that I should marry Marcello Sangiorgio, a man enamoured of

me, I will vanquish this evil fortune. If he seeks other consolation outside the house, I cannot complain of it. And you, I beg, do not ask me anything more, or force me to repeat what I have said to you, because this agitates me. I do all that is possible to create quiet around me, do not destroy it. To keep me alive, leave me in peace."

In this letter Beatrice paints herself as she thinks she is—that is to say, cold, indifferent, disdainful. But she is really fighting a hard fight with her nature, although it takes some time before she even knows it. She has not been able to remain really insensible to Marcello's noble, loving, lovable character; little by little her affection for him grows, until at last she falls into the abyss she has so nervously avoided, loving, suffering, being disquieted, anxious, and jealous. The genesis and development of this love, so slow to burn, so ardent when kindled, is told with care and minute analysis.

"Beatrice loved profoundly, loved as her mother may have loved. She had inherited from her the fervour, the intensity, the concentration of love; psychologically she was the daughter of Luisa Revertera. And she was this also physiologically. From her mother she had inherited a poor weak heart, injured in its fibres, almost monstrous, of irregular life. Thus the physical and psychic heart fought an internal battle, in which one or the other had to die."

Beatrice's malady shows itself, and she suffers cruelly; suffers in silence and solitude, however, for she will reveal her anguish to none. She also endures mental torture at her alienation from Marcello, which increases while her love grows. He is rarely at home now, and she knows whither he goes to find sympathy. Jealousy,

love, pride, wage a fierce warfare in her breast. She knows the first advances must come from her who has repulsed him, but she cannot bring herself to the point. At last, however, when she fancies he is leaving for good, her love breaks down all obstacles, and for the first time she opens the partition-door that divides their rooms and enters his study. It is a very touching and beautiful scene. The proud, loving, suffering woman has clothed herself in her wedding-dress, for this is to be a new wedding-day to them. "It is I," she says to the astonished but delighted Marcello, as she stands in the doorway; "I, thy Beatrice, thy wife. I have on my white dress: I love thee." Then follow some brief months of bliss, a late honeymoon, during which Beatrice's malady increases, until at last she dies. Her happiness has hastened the progress of the disease.

'Fantasia' is another such half-medical study. Lucia, who may be considered the heroine, and who supplies a study in *névrose*, is of the type of Dumas *filles* women,—one of those overwrought, hysterical beings, fantastic, cold, heartless, sentimental, egotistic, that are—to our shame be it spoken—the peculiar outcome of modern civilisation. She is cousin-german also to Madame Bovary, and has all her religious ecstasies, her moral defects. Like Madame Bovary, she is also a great *poseuse*, and is at times a dupe to her own fancies—in short, a creature whom one is doubtful whether to consider as wholly responsible for her actions. The prologue of the tale takes place in a Neapolitan convent school, where are assembled the *élite* of the city's maidens, and where already is shown in embryo the character of the two heroines, Lucia and her friend Catarina

Spaccapietra, a good, gentle, tranquil soul, who goes on her even way, untroubled by such torments of soul as, according to her own showing, rend her schoolfellow. Notwithstanding, or perhaps on this very account, she admires this friend to the point of adoration. When Lucia pours forth her incomprehensible gush, Catarina takes it for pure wisdom, too deep to fathom, for Catarina has no imagination; that is the keynote to her character, and therefore she is struck with it the more in her comrade, in whom it really is nought else but fantasy run riot. An attempt at suicide made by Lucia, who suffers from *Weltschmerz*, is averted by Catarina's simple heroism. Excited by this event, Lucia divides a lapis-lazuli rosary with her friend, and extorts from her a solemn promise that they will be faithful unto death in friendship, and that, if need be, each will sacrifice her happiness and even life for the other. This promise proves decisive for the destiny of the two girls, though it is not the one who has proposed it who is to feel its weight. Both leave school, and we next find Catarina married to a robust, simple-natured, honest man, Andrea Lieti, leading a tranquil existence, of which a charming glimpse is shown us. The couple are not wildly in love, but quite content; and if Catarina has anything to mar her happiness, it is that Andrea does not like her friend, whose extravagancies are his favourite theme for ridicule. In her simplicity of soul she strives to draw together the two beings she most cares for, and by a ruse leaves them alone one evening. Lucia, who is a coquette to the core, embraces the opportunity of fascinating this Herculean man, whose very healthiness has an

attraction to her unwholesomeness. The story of how he, repelled at first, gradually succumbs to her morbid fascinations; how she seduces him, while never dropping her half-mystic religious language and attitude; how she blinds Catarina, who lives only for domestic cares, and seeks to make those around her comfortable; how she deceives her own husband,—this is the upshot of the entire book. She marries very soon after that first evening alone with Andrea—marries a consumptive cousin after philandering for some time with one of her old school professors, who is madly in love with her, and who ruins himself for her sake. Very characteristic is her announcement to Catarina of her approaching marriage.

"I wanted to become a nun; my father would not consent. Then I prayed to God, and one day, like St Paul upon the road to Damascus, a great light dazzled me. I heard the voice of the Lord, who said to me: 'There is close by thee a sacrifice to be made, a work for thee to accomplish. Thy cousin, Alberto Sanna, loves thee; he is consumptive, half dead; marry him, you will be his sister of charity.'"

This mission, Lucia says, tempts her, so she has submitted to the divine command; for is she not the servant of the Lord? and since Alberto loves her, he at least will be happy. The character of this cousin, with his poor thin nature, who clings desperately to life, is excellently portrayed. Like most invalids he is occupied solely with himself and his symptoms; and by nature an egotist, he cares for nothing outside his wife, whom he regards as a part of himself. During a stay made by the couple at the Lietis, where Catarina sacrifices everything to Alberto's health and Lucia's comfort, things work

up to the catastrophe, when, to the deep but very differently expressed grief and horror of Alberto and Catarina, Lucia and Andrea elope together, Lucia leaving a note behind her for Catarina, in which she prays her to have pity upon her, that she is a poor wretched creature, that she has but followed the dictates of her fate. Stupefied, her faith in the beings she has loved best shattered so rudely and completely, life has at one blow become a meaningless void to Catarina. Like the straightforward simple soul she is, her first coherent thought is, what can she do? At Alberto's request she goes to him, and, finding him dying, succours him, and then only comes across her the remembrance of her girlish promise. "One must be ready even to die for the welfare of the other," had been the formula. With apparent *sang-froid*, but really stunned and broken, Catarina, the orderly and careful housewife, careful and orderly to the last, puts her affairs straight, then shuts herself in her room with a basin of charcoal, and here next day her servants find her corpse, the livid fingers clasping the broken rosary of blue beads,—the rosary that is the key to her guileless life. She has been faithful even unto death; for all her simple nature could comprehend of the great cataclysm of her life is, that it was for Lucia's welfare that Andrea should be free, therefore she, Catarina, must go forth into the silent land. And herewith the novel ends,—the authoress is too wise to pursue it further; but we feel that no good can arise from a freedom thus purchased. The story, of which this is the briefest *résumé*, is admirably worked out in every detail. The characters are harmonious throughout, even to that of Andrea; for it is not

incorrect that this man whose *physique* overpowers his mind, should succumb to the subtle physical attraction of his opposite. As for Lucia, she never for a moment loses her fantastic or her mystic note. Thus for example, when she runs away and carries off with her her diamonds, she also takes a little black Byzantine Madonna, to whom she has always prayed, and to whose possession she attributes an occult charm. The whole book is written with great care, fine psychological perception, and poetic intuition, and is faithful to nature even in those portions in which the writer brings a morbid complacency to bear upon the descriptions of sensual gratifications.

Very different-natured are the books put forward under the pseudonym of the Marchesa Colombi, a name taken from a figure in Paolo Ferrari's play "*La Satira e Parini*," in which appears a certain Marchese Colombi, a species of Italian "*Mrs Malaprop*." With one exception, the works of this author are chiefly occupied with North Italian burgher society; and in her pages we learn to know a great deal of that social class from which the English are as a rule rigidly shut out,—the one nation being somewhat exclusive and proud from poverty, and the other unable, as a rule, to make themselves agreeable to their foreign cousins owing to ignorance of their tongue. Yet the middle class, as we all know, is the backbone of a nation, and just that section of its society with which the philosophical and intelligent stranger should seek to make himself familiar. Always high-toned in her aim, never treating of social plague-spots, the Marchesa Colombi's books are very specially adapted for the reading of young women

to whom, indeed, she seems chiefly to address herself. But they are not, on that account, to be deemed namby-pamby food. They form excellent reading for both sexes and all ages; and though many, especially the shorter tales, are written purely to amuse, others have obviously a deeper purpose, though this is never insisted or dwelt on. In this respect the Italian novelists are specially successful. They do not loose themselves in the dreary wastes of didacticism in which we so often go astray. 'Il Tramonto d'un Ideale,' 'Tempesta e Bonaccia,' 'In Risaia,' 'Troppo Tardi,' 'Prima Morire,' are the titles of the Marchesa Colombi's novels; while 'Senz Amore,' 'Serate d'Inverno,' 'Dopo il Caffé,' and 'La Cartella No. 4,' are the collective names under which she has gathered together a number of the short tales she constantly writes in Italian periodicals. Perhaps she even writes a little too much. These stories are of unequal value,—sometimes excellent, full of sparkle and humour—for the Marchesa Colombi has that rare quality in a woman, genuine, good - tempered, large-hearted humour; at other times inconclusive, a trifle over - sentimental and unreal, and as though written in haste, and without due regard to probability.

Her first long tales, 'Troppo Tardi' and 'Prima Morire,' did not show the full force of her powers, and dealt more with the pathetic and sentimental than her later works, in which both her mind and writing are more robust. The first is the simple and melancholy autobiography of a warm - natured old maid, who longed for love, and to whom twice in life it came too late. As a mere child she yearned for her mother's affection, but could

not secure it; for the mother was a worldly woman, absorbed in social cares; and only long after, a hopeless invalid, a querulous burden, she throws herself upon her daughter, and desires that they should be all in all to each other. By that time it is too late. The daughter devotes herself with abnegation and heroism, but she has seen through this cold, heartless character,—she can no longer adore her mother as she did in childhood, or delight in the signs of affection she would then have died to receive. Her second disillusion is that love also comes too late. It is a sad tale, full of half tints, with no high lights to relieve the sadness.

'Prima Morire' is a romantic story of the conventional, foreign, seventh commandment type, in which, however, a higher ideal is held up than usual, and in which the man, who is the more high-souled of the two, dies after his first defection from the standard he had held up to himself, expressed in the motto, "Præsumere mori quædæm." The book, which is written in the old-fashioned letter form, a form much affected by the Marchesa Colombi, already reveals here and there touches of that philosophical spirit which animates the writer's mind, together with gaiety and light-heartedness, that curious combination of two qualities held by our northern notions to be incompatible, and of which the Italians are constantly furnishing examples. 'Tempesta e Bonaccia' deals with that burgher phase of professional artistic life, whose very existence we in England are apt to deny—a sphere in which the Marchesa Colombi moves with predilection. Her heroes and heroines are often actors or musicians, and this is the case here. The heroine is Fulvia, an opera-singer, daughter of a poor Government *employe*—an amiable,

light-hearted, honest girl, who is forced by poverty and her motherless position to travel alone from town to town to fulfil her engagements in various provincial theatres. It is the point of the story that Fulvia, by nature romantic, is betrothed to an upright, steady, but absolutely matter-of-fact German, who has not allowed this tendency any scope. Consequently, she makes to herself imaginary woes when we first encounter her, woes that cause her to think she is tied irrevocably to an unsympathetic, though worthy soul, and which make her long to know warmer feelings. How she finds the lyric enthusiasms of another less true than her "German tin soldier's" mutism, how she returns to the love she had lightly and idly thrown aside, is related with a fineness of preception that makes us regret the more that the *dénouement* is awkward and strained, marring a book otherwise excellent and out of the common run both in matter and manner.

Unquestionably the finest, best worked out and ablest of the author's works is the story that treats with pathos, delicacy, and tenderness of the rise and ultimate extinction of a youthful ideal, and the powerful tale of the North Italian rice-fields, in which the Marchesa Colombi has for the first time left the burgher class to write of the peasants whose life she clearly knows well, and with whose sorrows she manifests a virile sympathy. Indeed both these books are more vigorous than their predecessors. The scenes of both are laid in the same portion of Piedmont, the province of Novara; and in the former case we have an excellent series of pictures of the country life led by the small landed proprietors of Northern Italy, lives rather empty and

monotonous, that run in a fixed groove out of which escape is only possible by a move into the city—a move many of these persons can rarely afford to make. In Italy there is not the same constant intercourse between town and country dwellers that there is with us, and hence the teeming rich life of the one rarely overflows into the more placid course of the other. The hero of 'The Sunset of an Ideal' is Giovanni Berti, only child of the village doctor,—an ignorant plethoric man, useless as a physician, valued as a boon companion by the notabilities of the neighbourhood. For his sake they club together to educate the boy, who is greatly neglected by his father, and in especial he is noticed by Signor Pedrotti, the village nabob, who invites him to his table during the holidays, on which occasion the lad becomes acquainted with, and enamoured of, the nabob's only daughter. The girl returns his affection, and in due course Giovanni asks the father's consent to their union—a consent refused with ignominy to the poor landless youth who has been educated by his bounty. The insulting terms in which the refusal is couched, Giovanni's assurance that Rachel will be true to him, for he knows her serious loyal nature, call forth all the manly resistance in his character. He sets out for Milan, resolved to make name and fame for himself, so that the father, may be proud at last to call him son. The law is the career in which he has embarked, and for many years it is very uphill work, but the image of Rachel is ever before his eyes to comfort and uphold him. The narrative of his struggles and privations is told with that admixture of pathos and gaiety which marks true humour,

and with a vividness of description that is remarkable. Thus there is an account of the midsummer sultriness in the city of Milan that makes us hot to read. After patience and privations innumerable, fortune at last smiles on Giovanni. He defends the cause of a well-known personage, and thus attracts public attention. This is his first step upon the ladder of success, which he now mounts rapidly and steadily. But with success come its temptations. He is courted, drawn into society, succumbs to the fascinations of a fashionable woman, and the image of Rachael fades in his memory. He still looks forward to ultimate marriage with her; but he thinks there is plenty of time, and he is just now interested in the intrigue in which he is engaged. The news he hears by accident that Signor Pedrotti is dead, and that Rachel lives alone in the big castle, together with the discovery of a note from her, written years ago, that never reached him, in which she promises 'fidelity, arouse his slumbering ideal, and he rushes off to the village to claim the wife he has so long neglected. Most skillfully and artistically is this portion of the story told. He expects to find her changed, of course, but he pictures that it will be a change in which she, like himself, has gained in culture and worldly knowledge. He finds her a worthy, faithful and excellent person, but a rustic, a villager. Their interview, in which no definite words pass between them, and after which he departs for Milan, though he says he shall call again next day—a promise she knows he will not keep, and he knows he does not mean—is told with remarkable ability, tenderness, and fine tact; and mournful as is the sudden sunset of this

ideal, deeply as its pathos moves us, we acquiesce in its conclusion as a necessity that is inevitable. We only feel the vast "pity of it," and its sad truth to life.

'In Risaia' furnishes a forcible picture of the sufferings endured by those who work amid the rice-fields, where youth and health are sacrificed to a labour that makes women old crones at thirty. The nature of the work obliges them to stand in water that reaches above their knees, while in spring a white veil of mist envelopes all the flat land; and things grow worse rather than better when the heat increases, and there uprises from the stagnant waters miasmas whose stench is often insupportable. Yet to labour in the rice-fields is often the only means of livelihood to be gained by the young people of the district; and here they work together for long hours, ill-fed, ill-housed, to return home, after the harvest, fever-stricken and pallid. The heroine of the tale, Nanna, the spoil and only daughter of peasants, goes also to work in the rice-fields. There would be no absolute necessity in her case, if that rigid adherence to outward convention which specially characterises the Italians, and which the peasantry possess to a high degree, did not make it needful that, having reached a marriageable age, she should wear in her hair that aureole of silver pins which, after the fashion of those districts, is regarded as a signal that suitors may come forward. These pins are dear: it needs sixty-two francs for the father to purchase them, and he, poor man, barely knows how to pay his rent. But to get these pins is a necessity. The whole family put their shoulders to the wheel, and for this

cause Nanna goes into the rice-fields. How she, who is not robust, catches the fever here and yet returns next season, because the peasants hold that ague does not kill, and, after all, they most of them have it; how she gets it again; how superstitious rites are employed to cure her; how she recovers finally but is quite bald, so that the pins for which she has laboured and spent her breath can never be worn by her,—is told with power, and sufficiently interrupted by lighter incidents not to be too depressingly mournful. The strange admixture of kindness and brutal outspokenness to each other that distinguishes the peasantry is brought into high relief. The situation is summed up in the mother's comment when she finds that Nanna is bald.

“‘What God wills is never too much,’ Maddalena had said, and it was the quintessence of Christian resignation; because she saw well, that poor mother, that in that which God willed was comprised for her the end of any pride or maternal joy, and for her daughter a perpetual celibacy and a life of humiliation.”

And indeed Nanna is made to suffer much rudeness and taunting, and she grows embittered by her enforced celibacy, a condition regarded almost as a reflection upon morality by the lower orders. In the end she does marry a widower, who loves and esteems her, and the whole concludes merrily to the sound of the Christmas bells, the ultimate catastrophe being brought about by some of the peculiar Christmas customs of the people.

Space warns us we must close, though we would gladly have said more about this writer of vivacious invention and purity of aim, whose works are deservedly popular in her native land. And herewith we leave our quartette of Italian novelists, trusting that we have shown just cause for the statement made at the outset, that the complaint, frequently made, that there is no good current Italian literature, is unjustified; and that, in the domain of fiction at least, the Italians can measure themselves with their European contemporaries, and not be found wanting.

AN EXCURSION TO SOLOMON'S THRONE.

DERA ISMAIL KHÂN, *Sept. 27, 1884.*

AT noon on November 27th last, a small party of British officers reached the highest peak of the Suliman range, and after standing a few minutes on it, all but one descended to their bivouac. The one who remained was a surveyor, a major in the Royal Engineers,¹ well known throughout India for the truth, finish, and beauty of his water-colour paintings from nature. He opened a large white umbrella, and from beneath its shade "shot" with his theodolite various near and distant points, and then, when too benumbed for further work, rejoined his companions. To place that surveyor for two hours on the Takht-i-Suliman—the Solomon's Throne of our school geographies—1700 troops, with the necessary complement of camp-followers, mules, and camel-transport, had been marching for the previous twelve days; had stormed a position which, better defended, might have been impregnable; had killed some fifteen to twenty brave mountaineers; and had, by the time the force returned to cantonments, cost the Government of India about half a lakh of rupees.

I propose to describe in this paper how the expedition came to be sanctioned, and how it was carried out.

Upon the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, the boundary of British India was advanced westwards to the very foot of the mountains of Afghanistan and Bilochistan. In order to minimise the risk of "complications"—that

word of ill omen to over-cautious Governments—it was ordered that no officer should cross the border on any pretext whatsoever. But that circumstances have occasionally proved too strong for this stay-at-home policy, and that punitive raids and expeditions into the hills have sometimes been forced upon us, we should be to-day as ignorant of the topography and political geography of the mountainous regions immediately beyond our border as we were thirty-six years ago, when "the force of circumstances," or, as Russia calls it, respecting her own advance towards India, "imperious necessity," made the Punjab of Ranjeet Singh a British province. What is termed "the close border system" has kept our troops locked up in their frontier cantonments and outposts all the year round, has frequently led independent hill-tribes to believe that we were afraid of them, and has more than once conduced to mistakes and even disasters.

Two instances by way of illustration will suffice. In 1868, at what is known as the Uhlan Pass affair, a portion of the Kohat garrison stormed a stone breastwork upon a hill-top only four miles from cantonments, and suffered a repulse with the loss of thirty-seven officers and men killed and wounded. When the attack was ordered, cavalry were sent round the hill to cut off the retreat of the defenders as they streamed across the plain. After the repulse had been suffered, it was

¹ Major Holdich, R.E., now *en route* to Herat and Sarrahs in charge of the Survey Section of the Russo-Afghan Delimitation Commission.

discovered that the hill was not isolated, as was supposed, but connected with the main range, by a ridge, up which the enemy safely scuttled when they had beaten back the attack. On a later occasion, in the autumn of 1877, our troops twice entered the Jowkai hills by a narrow mountain-torrent bed, and suffered some casualties in consequence, in utter oblivion that not a mile off was a broad and easy pass up which a cavalry regiment could have advanced at a trot. The mouth of this pass was only seven miles from the Kohat cantonments and two from the main road !

Notwithstanding the timidity of our border policy, we have in the last thirty-five years on fifteen occasions launched punitive expeditions into the hills, and the opportunities thus presented have been invariably used to their fullest extent by the officers of the Frontier Survey Department of India. The blank spaces in our trans-border maps have thus been gradually reduced, until by the end of 1882, upon the immediate border of this district—a huge slice of country, about 30,000 square miles—the mountain-mass often collectively termed the Takht-i-Suliman, and regions beyond, alone remained a *terra incognita*. That for thirty-five years no peak of that gigantic wall which dominates this border to an average height of 10,000 feet for a stretch of 20 miles, and which lies quite close to that border, should have been ascended by an Englishman, is creditable to the discipline of the officers of Government, but discreditable to that Government itself. Russian officers, when they read this statement, will have some ground for believ-

ing that the spirit of enterprise and adventure has departed from Englishmen ; whereas the fact is, that but for the knowledge that even successful exploration is visited by the grave displeasure of Government—as, for instance, in the case of Mr Macnair, who last year penetrated into Kafiristan¹—the Takht-i-Suliman mountain would long ago have become the happy hunting-grounds of many a British subaltern. Had Government from the first encouraged a bold but cautious intercourse between ourselves and our hill-neighbours, and held small but frequent camps of exercise upon or even beyond the frontier itself, instead of occasionally marching our Piffer regiments to large distant camps *cis-Indus*, perpetual contact with us, and the material benefits derived therefrom, would have done more in a few years to soften and civilize the mountaineers on our North-west frontier than has been effected by the stiff procedure of nearly two generations.

It has been the practice of viceroys, instead of openly relaxing the severity of the rule which proscribes the country beyond the border to British officers and even subjects generally, rather to encourage trans-border exploration by inducing officers to break the rule at their own risk. The understanding was, that if successful they would receive praise and reward ; if unsuccessful, censure. Shortly before the late Afghan war began, the accomplished but rash and unfortunate Colonel (afterwards Sir George) Colley visited all our frontier stations and outposts from Quetta to Peshawur, and excited the spirit of adventure amongst our officers by proclaiming that it

¹ A region hitherto untrodden by European foot, and regarded as "the great mystery of Central Asia."

was infinitely preferable that some of them should be killed in doing the State service in the quest of useful information beyond the border, than by breaking their necks in pig-sticking or at polo. Following his advice, my immediate predecessor in the charge of this district—a Scottish gentleman,¹ now the governor of a Scottish prison—made a bold attempt early in 1878 to penetrate to the Takht, but on being opposed, was obliged to return to British territory *re infecta*, as his little excursion had been undertaken without the formal sanction of Government. As he has since retired, the incident may be safely mentioned now.

Soon after, the war in Afghanistan having denuded this frontier of troops, a rumoured disaster to General Roberts in Khost, the preaching of a *jehad* (holy war) against the *kāfir* (infidel) English in the hills just beyond our border and north of the Takht-i-Suliman, and the story that the English had retired from Dera Ismail Khān across the Indus, incited the Mahsuds—a barbarous but powerful independent tribe—to swoop down on the town of Tānk and burn it. For a few days all was confusion. Our own subjects joined the hillmen. The shops of the Hindus in many villages were looted and burnt. Our troops and police were either besieged or shut themselves up in their outposts. The British *rāj* (rule) was over; the Musalman *rāj* had returned; the hated money-lender, with his bonds, mortgage-deeds, and account-books would lord it no more over the faithful, but must resume his skull-cap (sign of dependence) and wear the turban no more; the land was to be the people's once more; free and unencumbered. Such was the

universal belief upon the Tānk border. A few days so, and then came swift vengeance. One struggle, in which eighty men—the whole fighting strength of the most fighting branch of a highland clan—were killed, taught subject and hillman alike that the British *rāj* was as vigorous as before. The invasion and insurrection were over, and all was quiet again. But the Mahsuds had yet to be punished. As no troops were available owing to the Afghan war, the offending tribe was blockaded—that is, excluded from British territory until the expedition could be sent against them. It was not until May 1881 that a force penetrated their fastnesses, and exacted, not vengeance, but redress for the outrages committed more than two years before. During the expedition the Mahsud hills were thoroughly explored and mapped. That work accomplished, the Surveyor-General, with his assistants and their field establishments, all now inured to hill-climbing from two years' experience in Afghanistan, were keen to scale the Takht, explore the whole valley beyond, and connect and check their Afghan reconnaissances and surveys with what had already been done inside and just beyond our border. How to induce Government to sanction the undertaking was the difficulty. The Liberals were once again in power. To them the Afghan policy of their predecessors was *anathema*. Cabul, the Khyber, and Candahar were abandoned; work on the Quetta Railway was stopped, the coolies scattered, the plant sent elsewhere; “masterly inactivity,” and therefore the “close border” system, were once again in the ascendant from the Khyber to the Bolan. Clearly no expedition to

¹ Colonel Macaulay, Governor of Ayr Prison.

the Takht would be sanctioned for purely scientific purposes, except under guarantees which no highland Afghan tribe had ever yet voluntarily given; and as to the use of pressure, that was out of the question. The people of India are free, and the independent hill-men beyond are if possible freer. What, then, was to be done? The heads of departments were clamorous for the expedition. The Commander-in-Chief, the Quartermaster-General—both Scotchmen,¹ by the way, who have achieved fame—and the Surveyor-General represented the urgency of the case to the Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab—another Scotchman² who has deservedly won his spurs—and he even admitted the extreme desirability of the exploration and survey of the mountain; but, true to the policy of his Government, he declined to recommend action to the Government of India until a fitting opportunity should present itself.

At this juncture the able officer of the Survey Department mentioned at the beginning of this paper, considered it time to depute himself on a delicate mission to Dera Ismail Khán to further excite the enthusiasm of the local civil authorities there in the cause he had at heart. Like a prudent diplomatist, he first enlisted the vote and interest of a certain lady in his cause, who with himself and myself forthwith laid our heads together to arrange a plan of action under which Government would be able to consent to place the theodolite on Solomon's Throne without departing from its declared policy. Like true conspirators, we met seldom, and when we met we

spoke little. Our prospects were at first too gloomy. We looked often enough at the provoking mountain, whose snow-covered slopes glistened in the morning sun so invitingly, yet so defiantly, pure and inviolable as a chaste virgin. We looked and looked, and every time we did so a deeper chagrin fell upon us. One day we passed an important resolution; we resolved that, officially and unofficially, we should, for diplomatic reasons, substitute the word "excursion" for "expedition." After that we advanced rapidly. Hindu, Mohammedan, and Sikh had each in succession ruled over Derah's broad plains; but to all three the Takht had been as an untaken fortress. Was it to remain a monument of reproach for us also? Pilgrims from Dera Ismail Khán had sat on Solomon's Throne, and had sometimes returned to their homes alive afterwards. Those who had done so described the distance from the border as a short two days' journey, and related wondrous tales of the sealed mysteries of the pine-clad basin which connects the northern and southern peaks. Westwards of the main range lies the Zhob Valley, described seventy-eight years ago as "the great caravan route to Candahar." The whole of this region was still a blank space in our maps. The inhabitants of the Takht—an Afghan tribe called Shiranis—and all their neighbours enjoyed free intercourse with British territory, and bartered the raw produce of their hills—the seed of the edible pine, which grows in forests in the upper plateaux of the range, wool of their sheep and goats, skins, live stock, and timber—for cloth goods and

¹ Sir Donald Stewart, Bart., G.C.B., Commander-in-Chief in India, and Sir Charles Macgregor, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Quartermaster-General.

² Sir Charles Aitchison, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

food-grains in our frontier villages. The "close border" system was a bar to reciprocation. Did any of our villagers venture one step beyond the border, he went at his own risk. Were he killed or maimed, there was no redress. His murderer might enter British territory the day after and swagger before his victim's door, yet none dare touch him. Did an official cross the border, he ran the risk of dismissal—the certainty of displeasure. Such a system rather intensifies than mitigates the savagery and exclusiveness of our independent trans-border tribes. Cautiously relaxed, the Englishman might have been by this time as respected in the Shirani or Mahsud hills as was the Roman citizen wherever he went within the bounds of his many-peopled empire.

Since annexation, only on two occasions had the Shirani hills been visited by British officers. Once, in 1853, troops had entered and burnt some of their villages as an act of reprisal; and again, in 1878, my predecessor had made an attempt to reach the Takht, as narrated some paragraphs back, and being fired at had withdrawn. With such a retrospect, the prospects of the expedition—excursion, I mean—seemed hopeless. It was certain that Government would veto any proposal which might be made on any terms except those of the consent of the tribe to the visit, and the surrendering of hostages for good behaviour. To expect independent Afghans to invite British officers to march through their hills and visit their holiest shrine, was to hope for impossibilities. However, where there is a will there is a way. To win Afghans it is first necessary to make them suffer, in which case they fear you; and after that to show them silver, in which case they will serve you.

Now it so happened that at the time the Shiranis richly merited punishment for past misdeeds. One of their smaller clans, named Khyderzais, or Sons of Khyder, had from time immemorial made their living by plundering others, and occasionally, amongst the others, villagers in British territory nearest their hills. The practice of the district in such case had been to apply the *lex talionis*, but in an indirect way. Whenever the Khyderzais harried cattle, the district officer quietly retaliated by seizing and retaining the next Shirani caravan which came into British territory, no matter to what section of the tribe it belonged. After seizure, the tribe would be notified that if the account was not settled by a given date, their property in our hands would be sold and our villagers compensated. Sometimes another procedure would be followed. Instead of property, relations or more distant fellow-clansmen of the actual offenders would be seized and imprisoned. Both methods are unknown in Europe, and officially somewhat irregular in India. But both are effective, recognised by all hillmen as justifiable, practised by themselves, and generally bring about the settlement of frontier cases speedily, and above all without fuss, which in these latter days of our centralisation and interminable report-writing is an important consideration for desk-tied officials. The more serious troubles on the Mahsud border had distracted attention from the Shiranis for the previous year or two; and in 1882, when their account was examined, the outstandings against the tribe were found to be too heavy to be realised by the district, but, nevertheless, hardly authorised practices explained above. Opportunely, too, about this time, a band of Shirani marau-

ders committed a murder for plunder inside our border, and burnt a water-mill. Under the circumstances, permission was obtained to blockade the whole tribe; and in furtherance of the object, neighbouring tribes were also induced to close their markets to them. At the end of nine months the Shiranis were collectively rather straitened for food and clothes, and consequently in a humble and penitent frame of mind. They sent in their representatives, and gave security for the payment of compensation for all their past misdeeds. The blockade was at once raised.

Now then was the time to show silver, to jingle rupees before their eyes, and promise them a handsome reward should they engage to conduct a party of surveyors to the Takht, and give hostages. They readily agreed in a general way to the proposal, provided that they should not be held responsible should some of their young bloods oppose us. Having gained their formal consent, and reduced it into the form of a solemn written engagement. I reported to Government that a better opportunity would never be obtained for exploring the Takht, as the tribe had promised assistance, and agreed to give hostages. On such terms, then, Government consented to let a survey-party ascend the Takht with a military escort.

A "military escort" is variously interpreted. To a charming girl it means a good-looking officer; to my civilian mind it meant a few hundred sepoy; but to the General it meant an army. On October 20th last, that formidable personage—another Scotchman of note, by the way¹—came quietly into the station. I was soon closeted with him.

"And what about carriage?" said he, after some talk.

"Why, you have 800 mules," I replied.

"Yes, for ordnance stores and regimental baggage, but not for commissariat purposes. We shall want in round numbers a thousand camels or their equivalent."

"Well, General," said I, rather astonished at such an unexpected requisition, "I'll do my best. How to manage it all in three weeks is the difficulty."

A day or two afterwards I rode out to the Draband outpost, facing the pass of the same name, up which lay the direct route to the Takht. The Shirani representatives ought to have been in attendance there, as they had been invited to come in some days before. Instead of coming, however, they sent a reply that they were busy cutting their autumn crops, and required time to consult together. It was clear they were in no hurry, whatever I was. Messengers were now despatched to them ordering them in. This time they replied by sending a deputation of their *moolahs* (priests), devout and peaceful men, whose mission generally is on such occasions to incite the faithful to war against infidels such as we are. I treated this deputation with the greatest respect. I fed them with fat mutton. I honoured the oldest priest with a chair, and, addressing him as *Moolah Sahib*, asked why the Shirani tribe had become so suspicious; did the *Sarkar Angrez* (English Government) ever lie?

"Well, Sahib," he replied, "you said you would come with a guard only, and now we hear that an army is collecting, and that the General Sahib will command it."

I replied that it was true that

¹ Brigadier-General Kennedy, C. B.

three regiments of infantry, two guns, and some cavalry would form the escort; but that its largeness was a compliment to their bravery, and would save their honour. They did not appreciate this reasoning, but asserted that the tribe believed the intention was to establish a cantonment upon their holy mountain.

"Moolah Sahib," I said, "we only want to draw some lines on a piece of paper, and the largeness of the guard means more rupees for your tribe. We shall pay for every blade of grass we take and every stick we burn."

At this they smiled and looked incredulously at each other. Then one of them asked, "How are you to get up there" (pointing to the mountain above us)? "There are no roads, and you can't walk."

"Oh," interposed one of my native assistants, "the Sahibs walk very well. They are great *shikaris* (hunters)."

"Pooh!" explained the oldest *moolah* to his companions, "I am a *Haji* (Mecca pilgrim). I know the tribe of the *Sahib logue*. I have seen them in Bombay. They drive or ride always."

"Well, Moolah Sahib," I replied, rather testily, "give me some hostages. I'll feed and pay them well, and you will see whether we can walk up a hillside or not. I don't want the General Sahib to have to kill any of you, if I can help it."

They looked rather dismayed at this, and began to talk eagerly together. "Well, well," said I, "consult together outside. My men will persuade you that the *Sarkar* only wants your good."

They then rose to go. Observing that one of them was a cripple, his right foot having been cleanly cut off above the ankle, I inquired, in a commiserating tone, how he

had lost it. The man actually blushed, and stammered out, "It was—burnt;" and then hastily withdrew. The others followed. One, however, lingered behind, and whispered something to my head native assistant, who nodded comprehendingly, and between laughing and pushing got him out of the tent.

When they were all gone, the assistant explained that my question had been an unfortunate one, as the *moolah* had been in youth something of a Don Juan, and had been deprived of his foot by an enraged husband, who had at the same time cut off his wife's nose and slit her lips.

After it was dark, one of the *moolahs* sent word that he wanted to see me privately. He came in and told me mysteriously that he knew the ways of the *Sahib logue*: they might not establish a cantonment just then on the Takht, but would soon; and that, as he lived near it, he wanted me to give him a certificate that if his relations did not fight against us, his family and possessions would be respected. To humour him I did so. This pleased him so much that he became talkative and confidential.

"What will it cost the *Sarkar* to get up there?" he asked, reflectively.

"Oh, not much—a quarter or half a lakh."

"What, Sahib! all that just to draw some lines on a bit of paper?"

"Yes, a Sahib never tells lies."

"And the cantonments," said he; "they won't be on the top, because there is no water there."

"Go, I tell you; the *Sarkar* wants to draw lines on paper, that is all."

"What, Sahib! half a lakh for that? However, *salâm*, Sahib—I have got your certificate. I am safe!"

He was gone. The whole deputation returned to their hills. Though they had seen no troops, the collection of supplies which was going on must have convinced them that a force was about to enter their country. Still the tribal headmen did not come in. Spies reported they were assembling and consulting. It was a matter of days now, and beyond the collection of supplies, which was progressing well, nothing had been done towards arranging the preliminary conditions imposed by Government, and the question of carriage had still to be decided. I was relying on the Shiranis themselves supplying 2000 hill bullocks—small, hardy animals, with hoofs like iron, each capable of carrying a load of 200 lb. But until the headmen should appear and arrange terms, nothing could be done. In desperation I addressed a sort of ultimatum to the tribe, threatening it in a vague language with the displeasure of Government did it not consent to do, with a good grace, what otherwise, sooner or later, it would be compelled to do. This time, instead of employing spies, I sent in some of my most reliable men, officials and non-officials. The ultimatum was a *brutum fulmen*; and if, by some mischance, the Government terms had leaked out amongst the Shiranis, they would know that it was such. Having been required to accomplish in a few weeks a work for which months should have been allowed, the stake played was worth the risk run. Whilst my men were in the hills, I lived months in days, so intense was my anxiety. About the evening of the fourth day, two horsemen came hurrying in to say that the tribal representative council would reach next morning. In they came, most of them on foot, some on horseback, about 100 in all.

They were then feasted, cajoled, and threatened, and silvered persuasion was employed to induce the leading recusants to use their influence with their fellow-clansmen to further the Government object. In thus purchasing a man's vote and interest, I had to be more cautious than any M.P., for corrupt practices were as abhorrent to Shiranis (tribally), as they are to Englishmen (collectively). Individually, every man was greedy to sell himself, provided that the purchase could be effected without the knowledge of the others, and several of the most fractious were so bought. When everything was in train for a settlement, I met the whole council in solemn assembly. The discussion which followed was as hollow and theatrical as a set debate in Parliament. The result had been prearranged; and although some of the late malcontents still harangued and raised objections, as patriots should, I knew that they were now my own men. By exposing their selfishness I might have brought down upon them the virtuous indignation of their fellow-clansmen, whose republicanism would have insisted on an equal division of the money already bestowed amongst all. Although in reality a poor little comedy was being performed, the uninitiated spectator would have thought the proceedings grave and serious enough for a tragedy.

Some readers may think that it was undignified on the part of a responsible political officer to stoop to *finesse* and underhand diplomacy in order to effect the object in view. No doubt it would have been more dignified had Government simply announced to the Shiranis that a strongly escorted survey-party would enter their hills and ascend the Takht, and that if any resistance was offered it

would be forcibly overcome ; but that if, as was expected, help was given, the tribe would be handsomely rewarded. If at the same time a regiment had been sent to Drãband, the Shiranis would have seen that Government would stand no trifling—would have at once bowed to the inevitable, and have striven by good service to make what money they could out of the expedition. Government, however, was constrained, owing to the non-interference policy which was again supreme, to lay down the preliminary conditions it imposed as to tribal consent and the surrender of hostages. The shortness of the time allowed for making arrangements gave me no choice but to act as I did. Until convinced that force is about to be used, an Afghan tribe is as dilatory and evasive as the Porte in either concluding or carrying out an arrangement not entirely to its own liking. Even when force is used, *finesse* is often required. In the Umbeyla campaign of 1863, in which a combination of tribes defied a force of 6000 of our troops for two months, and cost us a loss of 900 men, the coalition was not broken up until mutual distrust was sown amongst the leaders of the enemy by various devices, one of which, for its simplicity and success, deserves mention. Instead of receiving a deputation publicly, the political officer sent for the leading chief alone into his tent, and told him to sit down. The chief did so, whereupon the political officer, without saying another word, went on with his writing for twenty minutes or so, and then looking up remarked to the chief, "I hope your parrot is well?" and dismissed him.

On his rejoining the other members of the deputation, they asked him to narrate what had happened.

He told them the truth. Not a man believed him. He was discredited and distrusted from that hour, as all thought that he and his tribe had been bought over, and would betray them.

But to return to Takht-i-Suliman affairs.

When the number of hostages had been agreed to, and a route fixed, which was known to be the easiest though most circuitous, and was supposed to have drinkable water at convenient stages, the question of carriage was discussed. I was prepared for disappointment, and already making other arrangements. It was, however, advisable to throw the odium of failing to take advantage of a seemingly reasonable offer on the Shiranis. The offer was accordingly made. They met it by asking exorbitant terms and raising absurd difficulties. Thus one greybeard boldly asserted that their oxen were so self-willed that unless each animal's tail was twisted by its particular owner it would lie down. Was I then prepared to feed 2000 Shiranis? I closed matters by replying sharply that I would not have such useless animals at all. They had been given the chance of making many thousand rupees, but as they had failed to appreciate it, their enemies the Nasar Powindahs would be employed.

The fact was, I had become convinced that the General's objections to Shirani carriage were insuperable. By employing them he had pointed out that we should be at their mercy at any time. The Nasars, could they be persuaded for their own profit to undertake the work, would do it well. They are a leading clan amongst a great tribe of warrior traders and graziers, collectively known as Powindahs, who for centuries past have led the life they are leading

to this day. In the hot weather they sojourn in Afghan Khorasan, and every autumn fight their way down through the passes into India through Dera Ismail Khán, bringing with them the products of their own hills—grapes, almonds, dried fruits, dye materials, drugs, &c. They leave their women, children and she-camels in the different grazing tracts, both cis- and trans-Indus, and carry their merchandise all over India. As the spring advances, they return as they came, taking back with them Manchester and Indian made piece-goods, tea, &c. The Nasars were then daily streaming down through the Gomal Pass into the district. They are very independent men, will not tolerate bullying, and will only work for others, no matter what the pecuniary inducement, when so inclined. An attempt four and a half years before to coerce them into hiring and selling their camels to Government for service during the late Afghan war had caused a riot, in which a brother of their chief was killed, and had all but driven them into joining the Mahsuds and our own rebellious subjects in the disturbances then occurring. The great advantage of using Nasar camels as carriage lay in the fact that their usually spongy feet were hardened by years of hill-climbing, and that their owners were armed men, accustomed to hold their own against all comers. Amongst disadvantages was their excessive independence and touchiness, and the doubt whether their she-camels, many of them great with young, could endure the wear and tear of hill-climbing over sharp limestone rocks, each carrying nearly 400 lb. of supplies on her back. There was no hope that the Nasars would be willing to hire out their male camels on any terms, as all such, heavily loaded

with the produce of Khorasan, were being hurried on to one or other of the Indian markets. As to plain-camels, male and female, their feet would be too soft for the rough work which had to be done. Thus it was I had to fall back on female hill-camels, provided the owners would readily come to terms with me. Horsemen had been sent round to the different Nasar camps in the district to summon the headman of each to Dràband. Though, like all Afghans, stern republicans in principle, the dangers of their annual march to and from India, through the lands of hostile tribes, compel each section to adopt a rude discipline and obey the man whom the common voice affirms to be the bravest and ablest leader. It is thus easier to deal with Nasars than with most independent Afghans. Their chiefs responded promptly to the summons. Their greatest chief was named Abdullah Khán, the grandson of a leader who, thirty-six years before, after defying the Sikhs for years, fought the late Colonel Sir Herbert (then Lieutenant) Edwards close to that very place. This Abdullah Khán's brother had been killed there, as already mentioned, four and a half years before. Abdullah Khán himself had been since treated with a certain amount of suspicion. To gain him over was a necessity. I determined to treat him frankly,—told him the strait I was in, and that I expected he would do his best to help, so that bygones might be forgotten; and, "what is more," I said, "let your clan do their work well, and I'll introduce you to the Lord Sahib (Lieutenant-Governor), and get you a dress of honour, and, still greater honour—a chair."

The man's handsome Jewish fea-

tures gleamed with pleasure at the anticipated reward, and yet he haggled for something more.

"Would I also let his camels graze nearer the border than heretofore?" he asked.

"No; I could not do that."

"Well, then, might their grazing-ground be changed to such and such a ground?"

"Yes," I said at once. "I would agree to that."

Having come to terms with him, a business-like agreement was soon made with the other headmen, was reduced into writing, and solemnly marked or sealed by each man. Illiterate though they were, that last little ceremony literally sealed the compact, and bound them more strongly to their engagement than if half-a-dozen constables had been sent back with each of them. It had been the same with the Shirani *Jirga* (tribal council). Though none of them could read or write, a formal compact had been drawn up and subscribed.

Everything being in train, I returned to Dera Ismail Khán greatly relieved in mind, and informed the junior conspirator that our plans were on the point of realisation. She, however, faint-heartedly seceded, and openly declared that she wished "this dangerous expedition would be countermanded." On November 15th I returned to Drāband, and there received a message from Jamāl, the chief of the Khyderzai section of the Shiranis—the nest of irreconcilables who inhabited the higher slopes of the great mountain, and lived by plunder and grazing. This Jamāl informed me that he and his men would come in on condition that I agreed to help him with men and arms to take vengeance on certain enemies of his. His conditions being refused he went back to his

lair, vaguely engaging to meet us on the Takht itself.

On the 19th we made our first march into the hills. We entered with nearly 1700 fighting men and 700 followers, including 400 Nasar camel-men. We carried 15 days' supplies and stores on 1100 camels and 800 mules. Of the camels about 500 were loaded with *bhoosa*, or chopped straw, than which a more wasteful, bulky, and altogether inconvenient load for hill campaigning is inconceivable. The route by which the General had determined to ascend the Takht was a very circuitous one. We were to pierce the range by the Zao Pass, about thirty miles north of the Takht, and then work round its flank to a reported spring and goat path called Pazai. After ten months of continuous drought, so bare and parched was the country that herbage was very scanty and springs and streams were either dried up or sadly shrunken. The success of the expedition depended on the Pazai spring being found at the place at which I supposed it to be, and on its having a sufficiency of water for our wants. As all my information was that of a few untrustworthy spies and Shiranis, there was no certainty that I had correctly diagnosed the truth from their conflicting statements.

The second march brought us to the mouth of the Zao Pass. A few of us pushed on through it. Before we had gone half a mile, a waterfall, compelled us to abandon our horses and proceed on foot. Obstacle the first was formidable, and would certainly delay progress some hours. Further on, a low overhanging rock above our heads promised to knock off the camel-loads; whilst under our feet a polished ledge, over which the stream flowed, made it certain that

camels and horses would here slip and fall. Obstacle the second looked forbidding enough to stop the whole force for a day or more. Again we went on—the pass becoming narrower and narrower, until it would have been impossible for two horsemen to ride abreast in it. On either side rose almost perpendicular walls of rock to a height of over 1000 feet. Half-a-dozen men at the summit of either cliff could, by tilting over boulders and dropping down stones, close the road to the whole force, until the heights on either side could be crossed, and that would have been a work of a day or more. At last, after passing many nasty spots, through which it seemed unlikely that the *bhoosa*-loaded camels would be able to squeeze without losing their loads, we came to Dabarrah—i. e., “the rock”—and scrambled up and over it with difficulty. Obstacle the last seemed to bar further progress altogether. A square mass of limestone, full 40 feet in diameter, had many years before fallen from above, and jammed between the walls of the defile, a foot or two from the ground. The action of water had gradually filled up its self-made bed above the fallen rock, over one of whose now rounded sides the little stream broke in a pretty cascade. On the other side the curve of the rock inward, and a corresponding concavity in the face of the cliff, would give a camel a width of 5 feet clear, could a ramp be made of sufficient height for the purpose.

Natives called this the easiest pass through the range in Shirani country. Two military officers, who had pluckily reconnoitred through it some years before, had enthusiastically reported that but for the one obstacle of the Dabarrah

rocks which would have to be shattered with gunpowder, guns could traverse it without difficulty. I have no doubt we were all very depressed as we sat on the top of that awful rock, and longed for the dynamite or blasting powder, and the tools and the sappers which should have been with us, but were not. I was the first to speak.

“Well, can it be done?” I asked.

“It’s not an easy business; but it has to be done, and it must be done,” was the soldier-like reply of the General’s Chief of the Staff,¹ a Highlander and great *shikari*, and therefore a splendid hill-walker. We got back to camp about dark. That night a halt for the morrow was ordered and arrangements were made for sending out all available men in working-parties by dawn next day. From General downwards there was gloom on every face; and but that the recorded opinion of two military experts coincided with that of my native informants as to the character of the defile, I should probably have been roundly blamed for the inaccuracy of my intelligence. On such occasions the political officer is always the scape-goat at the time, though justice is generally done him afterwards. The whole of the next day was spent in bridge-making, road-making, ramping, and endeavouring to blow off two awkward corners of the Dabarrah rock with saluting-powder, for we had no other explosives.

“A pocketful of dynamite cartridges would have wrought magic there,” said the colonel of a pioneer regiment, whom a love of adventure had induced to join what he called the Takht “picnic.”

“Yes; it would have let the *bhoosa* through without unloading

¹ Colonel MacLean, C.B.

to-morrow, and have left an everlasting monument of our power for all Central Asia," some one remarked.

As the Dabarrah rock is known to most Powindahs, and they travel annually backwards and forwards in tens of thousands between all parts of Khorasan and India, and even as far as Bokhara, the removal of the rock would have been noised abroad to our credit through Central Asia. The Zao defile, up to some seventy or eighty years ago, was the safest and easiest caravan route through the Suliman range on this border; but the fall of the great rock has almost closed it.

That evening the road was reported to be practicable. Although there was hardly any moon, the Nasar carriers volunteered to march through with their loads during the night. They did their best. About 300 camels were through by eight on the following morning, but those clumsy *bhoosa*-loads stuck. When I pushed on in the early morning, hoping against hope to be able to return with a line clear report to the General, I found a jam of camels and *bhoosa*-loads in several places, and the Nasars sitting helplessly by warming their numbed fingers round little fires they had made. There was no help for it. Another halt was ordered, and all that day sepoy and officers toiled like navvies at piece-work in negotiating camels and loads, step by step, up that grim cleft of a pass, until they jammed again below the ramp which led to the narrow opening between the Dabarrah rock and the cliff. Many of the camels were unloaded at the foot of the ramp, and one by one hustled through by a score of sepoy, pulling, pushing, and half lifting them; their loads were then carried up by the sepoy; the terrified animals were next caught,

and made to sit, and then reloaded. The camel is rightly considered the most mal-odorous, unintelligent, and unattachable brute yet subjugated to man's uses, and certainly the vast majority of them were provokingly stupid and cowardly before that Dabarrah rock. But a score or so quite belied their evil reputations. Those few seemed to take in the situation at a glance, calmly walked up the lower part of the ramp, which was an inclined plane, until they came to that portion which, owing to its steepness had been made like a stair in steps. Here each intelligent animal knelt down, thus keeping her load fairly on the horizontal, and pushed herself up, step by step, by her extended hind-legs. The passage of that Dabarrah rock took twenty-six hours, the troops working by relays at it in splendid style up to 10 P.M., and recommencing next day at 4 A.M. When the last load was through, our satisfaction was intense. We now all looked forwards hopefully to the accomplishment of our undertaking, although we knew that the unexpected check in the past had seriously reduced our supplies, and that there were many days of hard work in front of us before we could return. If the clouds would hold off for a fortnight more, and that Pazai spring should not prove a myth, we must succeed. We were now on the wrong side of the Suliman range, with only ten days supplies in hand, and completely cut off from all communication with British territory by that awful defile which a few hours of rain or a dozen resolute men could absolutely close against all comers for a couple of days at least. However, onwards was the word. A long march brought us to a deep basin in the hills immediately below the northern peak of the Takht, which pierced the thin air 6000 feet

above us like the point of a rusty lance. The camp was pitched at the head of a cleft in the main range, down which rushed in a series of waterfalls and rapids the Draband Zân river, now reduced to about the volume of a small trout-stream. Next day we marched almost due south, skirting the Takht. The route lay up the bed of the Draband river. Many of us were now not quite so festive as we had been a few days before. The hot sun by day, the freezing nights, but more especially the bad water we had been drinking, began now to make head and stomach a little sick. The water at our last camp had been very peculiar. It drew the mouth and throat a little when drunk, much as "very dry," and probably very much alumed, sherry does; but when put on the table with meat and tinned vegetables, as soup, it was positively undrinkable. The taste was bitter as quinine.

We were now opposite the place of ascent. The main mass, hitherto to east, north, and west apparently an unscalable natural fortress, with scarped precipitous sides, thousands of feet in depth, here threw out a little spur towards our camp, as it were a buttress for self-support. Though very steep, the ascent of the first two miles was clearly easy enough; but beyond, our glasses could only distinguish a sort of knife-edge, with here and there pine-trees in groups, and singly contorted rocks and black-looking chasms. This was the Pazai, or "woman's nose" path. But where was the spring? It had not yet been found. I had sent on some of my best scouts and spies to look for it. Presently we heard several shots fired, and soon after some of my men were seen running back, wild with excitement and full of wilder stories of attack and destruction.

By degrees all came back but one—the only mounted police orderly I had taken with me. The General and some other officers, well escorted, now went forward to reconnoitre, and soon found the poor fellow hacked to pieces. The route lay up the tortuous bed of a strong nullah or torrent. Here and there a little dampness in the ground indicated the presence of water; narrower and narrower grew the nullah, and yet there was no water. The pent-up excitement of those minutes was intense—to me at least: on the finding of a living spring depended the success or failure of the expedition—credit or discredit to myself. On we went. Suddenly we saw a little small puddle, and heard the delicate and delicious music of water trickling over pebbles. On we pushed, and there, sure enough was a tiny spring at the very head of the nullah, gushing out of the rock.

"With careful troughing and guarding it will be enough for the whole force," was the dictum of the General. As if conscious of our success, the hidden enemy above us—for by this time we knew that the passage of that nasty-looking knife-edge was to be disputed—fired off some twenty or thirty shots, and precipitated some huge boulders, which reverberated grandly as they rolled and leapt down into a deep basin on our left. Next day the General moved camp to the Pazai spring, and we made ourselves as safe and comfortable as the confined and sloping nature of the ground would permit.

Some of us amused ourselves during the afternoon by watching through our glasses the mountain fanatics, who had assembled to oppose our ascent. To get at them we had to traverse between two and three miles, with a rise

of fully 4500 feet. They showed themselves freely on the sky-line, lounging about with their matchlocks in their hands. Sometimes a dozen or more would be seized with a dancing frenzy, flash their *tahoars*, and whirl round like the spinning dervishes at Constantinople. We could distinctly hear them felling trees, and now and again the dull thud of falling rocks and stones proved that they were still intrenching their position. As night closed in, the crest was lit up by a hundred log-fires.

Strong though the position was, the defence was weak. The attack was well planned and carried out, and deserved a less feeble resistance. As usual in Asiatic warfare, success was due to a turning movement. So well was this managed, that within a few minutes of the front attack opening fire, the rattle of independent rifle-firing was heard from a ridge behind the enemy's highest breastwork, and all opposition soon melted away. Oddly enough the first body found was that of Jamál, the Khyderzai chief, who had, ten days before, vaguely announced that he would meet me on the Takht. He had kept his word. The seizure of their spring, and the flight of the *moolahs* before a shot had been fired, had taken all heart out of the enemy. The few wounded picked up, as soon as assured that they would not be killed, cursed their priests for inciting them to oppose the *Sarkar Angrez*, and showed in many ways their gratitude for the kind treatment they were receiving, and repented much of their folly in fighting. By 8.30 A.M. we had all clambered over the last breastwork, and were inside the Khyderzai position, in amongst the pine-trees and wild roses, rather dry and brown certainly ; but still

there was music to the ear in the "going in the tree-tops," and sweet scents for the nostrils in the wild thyme and other fragrant herbs and plants about our feet ; and the still blazing log-fires—ringed round by the footprints of the enemy, who had spent part of the night in the performances of circular war-dances—were ready for our fry-pans. What a picnic breakfast that was ! Never were frizzling bacon, tinned butter, and unleavened cakes more appetising or more largely consumed. Water, however, was at a premium ; we were still nine miles from the northern peak, the route to which lay through a weird, waterless depression, impracticable for mules, because of the terrible fissures and chasms which cracked its surface in all directions. As to Solomon's Throne, there it was almost directly in front, quite three miles north of the position generally assigned to it ; and there too was the Survey Southern Station—fixed in anticipation from several stations in British territory—seemingly inaccessible, but even, if not so useless for survey purposes as the ridge we were on, interposed between it and the hitherto unknown regions westwards.

I returned to camp in the afternoon. That morning before dawn I had gone round amongst the different "friendly" Shirani chiefs with us, and tried to induce some of them to act as guides, but every man had some excuse. Some were in such a dead slumber that I could not wake them with my boot ; some were sulky,—we ought to wait another day, (to eat up more of our fast-failing supplies ?) and send a deputation up with the Koran, and persuade the mountaineers to come down peaceably. Some said there was no road ; some professed to be suffering from colic, and unable to move. In fact, all made excuses ;

and with much difficulty two poor men were at last found, and promised fifty rupees each if they did well. The day before, too, I had noticed that our Nasar camel-men were more independent than usual; they were less obliging; refused to lend or sell their water-skins, or pretended they had none; showed no pleasure when addressed, or alacrity to do anything.

"Are we to halt to-morrow, Sahib?" said one of them to me the day before.

"Yes; but some of us are going up there," I replied, pointing to the line of watch-fires on the crest of the mountain.

"Not to-morrow, Sahib, I am sure," was the confident answer.

Both Nasars and Shiranis evidently expected that we should negotiate, or that there would be delay in taking such an ugly place; and, no doubt, the expectation was father to the thought. Though non-official India is on the whole well disposed to the British *rāj*, it nevertheless rejoices when we suffer checks or even disasters; and this feeling is naturally much stronger amongst "friendly" frontier tribes than British subjects.

As I re-entered camp, the Nasars everywhere rose and *salâmed*, and came forward and offered smiling congratulations, water-skins, wood, grass, and anything they had or could get. The "friendly" Shiranis were positively enthusiastic, and thanked God that a score of those hill-robbers had been killed. "What fools," they kept on vociferating, "to fight against the *Narkar Angrez!* What a pity their *moolahs* had not all been killed!" &c., &c. The colic-smitten were all well now; and that evening many of us had fresh fowls and fresh eggs to dinner, and fresh milk for our coffee.

It was not until 1 P.M. on the following day that a sufficient

quantity of water had been conveyed in skins to the position taken from the Khyderzais, since designated the Pazai Bivouac, to warrant a push being made for the summit of the Suliman range. That peak was still nine miles distant; and although the route looked level enough from our eyrie, reconnaissance proved that it was bisected by numerous ravines which mules could not cross. The true Takht—Solomon's Throne—seemed in the clear atmosphere only a mile or two away, W.N.W. from us, right across the valley. We could distinguish a pathway and a stick with a rag attached to it, immediately below which was the wish-fulfilling seat—a mere ledge in a cleft of the rock. Here it was that King Solomon—so the legend ran—more than 2000 years before, had listened to the prayer of his Indian bride, and, alighting from his airborne chariot, had sat with the weeping girl on that ledge, as she cast one last fond look towards the plains of Hindustan. Since that time the spot has been sacred—first as a purely Hindu shrine, and then, after the collapse of Hinduism in those regions, before the triumphant advance of Islam, as a holy place for both Hindus and Mohammedans alike. Gratifying though it would have been to some of us to have sat where the many-wived Israelitish monarch is fabled to have rested with his dark-skinned bride, the spot being impracticable as a survey-station, and there being no time to spare, no attempt was made to reach it. Surveyors, followers, and escort—250 sepoys armed and 250 unarmed, carrying water, cooked rations, and bedding—halted for the night at the foot of the shoulder of rock, the summit of which forms the highest point in the range. It was a beautiful spot, smooth and grassy, amidst a forest

of magnificent pines. Being in a hollow, and having a vast catchment-area of encircling rock, there ought to have been water in plenty ; but here, as elsewhere, the previous ten months of drought had dried up ponds and the hidden sources of springs. That night was spent miserably enough. Sleep visited few. Each man kept turning his body round and round, like a joint on a spit before the kitchen fire, according as the part affected felt frozen or roasted. A happy mean betwixt heat and cold was impossible, because one had to lie on the lee side of a log-fire or run the chance of being roasted to death or suffocated. Towards morning men dozed off, and the sun was well up before the thawing process was sufficiently advanced to let the most active prepare breakfast.

The inner man warmed and renovated, the northern peak (11,300 feet), locally called Ubashta Tzuka, or Juniper Point, from a presumably *lucus a non lucendo* reason, was scaled, and found to be quite easy walking. Though the view disclosed was vast, commanding an area of more than 40,000 square miles, it was disappointing. On all sides, except directly southwards along the dorsal ridge of the main range, which was black with pine-forests, the country looked like a crumpled sheet of brown paper, with here and there a glistening atom of mica on it, indicative of water. However, the surveyor was satisfied. He managed to "shoot" all his points, and that was the main thing. That night was spent much as the former one, and next evening, towards sunset, the Pazai Bivouac was reached once again. There, a mile below, shone the white tents of the standing camp, with all the luxuries it contained—water to wash in, the steaming stewpan with its savoury contents, and the delicious certainty of a

sound sleep at night. Some went down at once, but the majority had to stand fast. The indefatigable R. E. major, balked of placing his triumphant theodolite on Solomon's own particular seat, insisted upon the necessity of a good base-line, and therefore of a southern as well as a northern station. He had his way as usual ; and next morning, strongly escorted, reshot all his points from a suitable peak to the south of our bivouac. Whilst he was so employed, the sepoys both warmed and amused themselves by lighting large bonfires. A herd of *markhor*—the chamois of the locality—seemed in no way disconcerted at our noisy intrusion upon their solitudes ; but grazed on unconcernedly immediately below, until they came so near that one could have dropped a stone on to them. Their confidence was not misplaced, as, had a volley been fired at them, the picket at the Pazi Bivouac might have been disturbed ; and had the signaller there flashed down to the General, "Heavy firing in survey direction," some one would have got a wigging which the present of a haunch of venison might not have averted. About noon a cloud was observed to the south, an unusual sight for us. It seemed to be in a hurry to deliver some message with which it was charged. It sailed along towards us, skipping from peak to peak, and leaving the summit of each covered with its whitest note-paper. It reached us in time, and delivered its message in the same polite way, softly, silently. The message was easily read. All mountain-climbers know it and obey. It ran—"Time up ; you must vacate my premises." We did so. The indefatigable major shut up his umbrella and grudgingly grumbled forth : "I have done. It's a pity, though, I missed two points over Quetta."

The survey reconnaissance from the Takht was over. None of us were sorry. We hastened down, and, without reluctance, turned our backs on Solomon's Throne and all the wild glory of its surroundings,—the long grim valley, with its ghostly silence, its myriads of pines, its deep fissures, its fantastic ridges, and its rocky pinnacles on either hand. All hurried back to the standing camp, to wash, to eat, to sleep, to feel jolly over arduous work well done. The genial old General had a cheery word for all those whom he could recognise; for four days and nights spent in high altitudes, sleeping in the smoke of log-fires in innocence of soap and water, had so begrimed some of his officers, that the fair-skinned Englishman's complexion was hardly distinguishable from that of his Asiatic brother, the hardy patient sepoy of Northern India. The rest is soon told. We were all impatient to get back to civilisation again. *Bhoosa*-laden camels no longer kept the rear-guard out till near midnight. Both *bhoosa* and other supplies were finished now; but we met some fresh supplies on the way, escorted by a motley contingent of 300 dirty, hungry-looking Shiranis. Our luck hitherto had been great. It could not fail us now. If rain fell before we were through that forbidding Zao defile, we might yet have all that weary work of roadmaking to go through again, and be detained on the wrong side of the pass until we had eaten out our fresh stores of flour and corn. Luck, however, stuck to us. No rain fell. On December 5th last, we re-entered British territory, and two days afterwards the troops marched back into cantonments all travel-stained, many shoeless, and

most tattered as to their knickerbockers. Neither shoe-leather nor human skin nor woven texture of the loom had been proof against the sharp incisiveness of the jagged limestone rocks of the Takht.

The expedition was a success. The proverbial *iqbál* (good fortune) of the *Sarkar* (Government) carried us through without any serious check. When we started we were heavily handicapped. The chances of opposition in the Zao defile—of rain rendering it impassable after we had placed ourselves in the further side, of exhaustion of supplies, and of the drying up of the Pazai spring—were all contingencies, any one of which might have greatly delayed progress, or even caused total failure, but none of these happened. The season was against us,—that was our only piece of bad luck. Had the expedition been ordered for this year instead of last, we should have been in clover. This cold weather the most barren hills in the most arid tracks of the Suliman Mountain and regions beyond are knee-deep in grass. The rainfall of the late hot weather has been heavy, well distributed, and general. Towards the end of January last, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab marched to Dera Ismail Khán, and held a *darbar* there. Amongst those introduced were the sectional heads of the Shirani tribe and Abdullah Khán, the Nasar leader, who has been mentioned several times in this paper. The former were feasted and commended for services faithfully rendered, and the latter was honoured both with a handsome robe of honour and a chair.

So ended our excursion, which may justly be regarded as a remarkable episode in the history of India.

WITHIN HIS DANGER :

A TALE FROM THE CHINESE.

" You stand within his danger, do you not ? "

—*Merchant of Venice.*

"Hence it comes to pass that when men return home [from Hang-chow] they say they have been to the City of Heaven, and their only desire is to get back thither as soon as possible." Thus wrote Marco Polo. The modern Chinaman breathing the same enthusiastic admiration for the most beautiful city in Eastern Asia, says, "See Hang-chow and die;" and unless we are to suppose that every traveller who had visited the town has been a victim to hallucinations, there are few spots on the surface of the earth which surpass in bright beauty the city and neighbourhood of Hang-chow. Earth, sky, and water there combine to form one of the most lovely pieces of landscape-gardening on a gigantic scale that it is possible to imagine; while the coloured roofs of the *iyamun* and pagodas, the countless bridges and splendid temples of the city, present objects of man's art which are not unworthy of their natural surroundings. Even the wondrous beauty of the lake which washes the western wall of the city, is held to be heightened by the temples, palaces, and pavilions which adorn the islands scattered over its surface; while all around it, in the words of the Venetian traveller, which are as true now as they were in the thirteenth century, "are erected beautiful palaces and mansions, of the richest and most exquisite structure that you can imagine, belonging to the nobles of the city."

On summer evenings it is the

habit of these noble citizens to take their pleasure on the lake in barges, which reflect in their bright decorations and luxurious fittings the meretricious beauty of their surroundings. In such a galley, one glorious evening in early autumn, the magistrate of Hang-chow was taking his ease at the close of a hard day's work, and by contact with the fresh breezes of heaven was seeking to rid himself of the taint of chicanery, bribery, and intrigue which infected every nook and corner of his *yamun*. His *compagnon de voyage* was a Mr Tso, an old resident at Hang-chow, and one in whose judgment the magistrate placed much confidence. Being rich and independent, he could afford to hold his own opinions, even when they clashed with those of his present host; and accustomed as the magistrate was to the society of toadies, it was refreshing to find a man who did not hesitate to contradict him to his face. The evening was one rather for still enjoyment than for much talking, and for some minutes not a word had been spoken between the friends, when, on rounding a point in the lake, the boat sailed into view of the house and grounds, famed in local history as being the most beautiful among the beautiful, and as having descended in the Tseng family from father to son through countless generations.

"Well," said the magistrate, after gazing long and admiringly at the landscape, "if I were not the magistrate of Hang-chow, I would

be Mr. Ts'eng. What an enviable lot his is!—young, rich, talented, the husband of a charming wife, if report speaks truly, and the owner of such a lovely house and gardens as those yonder. That willow clump is just the spot where Su Tungp'o would have loved to have written sonnets; and that mass of waving colour is enough to make Tsau Fuhing rise from his grave and seize his paint-brush again."

"I don't deny," replied Mr. Tso "that Ts'eng's lot has fallen to him in pleasant places. But though I should much like to exchange possessions with him, nothing would induce me to exchange personalities. He never seems really happy. His is one of those timid and fearful natures which are always either in the depths of misery or in the highest of spirits. He is so sensitive that the least thing disturbs him; and he is so dependent on outside influences, that a smile or a frown from Fortune either makes or mars him. And then, between ourselves, I have my doubts as to his scholarship. It is true that he passed his B.A. examination with honours, but it did so happen that his uncle was the chief examiner on the occasion; and though I don't charge either uncle or nephew with anything underhand, yet my son tells me that others are not so charitable."

"You are all, I think, hard on our friend," said the magistrate. "I don't know much of him, but I have always heard him spoken of as a man of learning and ability. However, I have written to invite him to my picnic on the lake tomorrow, and we will then try him at verse-making, and see what he is really made of."

That the magistrate's admiration for the Ts'eng garden was fully justified, every admirer of brilliant colouring would readily admit.

Indeed no fairer prospect could be imagined, and as the autumn sun sent its slanting rays through the waving branches of the willows and oaks, and added lustre to the blood-red leaves of the maples, it was difficult to suppose that anything but peace and content could reign in so lovely a spot.

But Tso was not far wrong in his estimate of Ts'eng's character; and in addition to the bar to happiness presented by its infirmities, there was one dire misfortune which took much of the brightness out of his life. Though he had been married six years he had but one child, and that a daughter. It was true that he was devotedly fond of the little Primrose, as he called her, but nothing could make up to him for the failure of a son to carry on the succession of his name and fortune, and to continue the worship at the family graves.

At the very moment that the magistrate and his friend were passing down the lake, Ts'eng and his wife, Golden-lilies, were sitting in a pavilion, which stood in the midst of the flower-garden, surrounded by a profusion of blue hydrangeas, China asters, pomegranates, citrons, jasmines, peonias, honeysuckles, and other flowers indigenous to the favoured regions of Central China, watching Primrose chasing a curly-coated puppy along the crooked paths as well as her poor little cramped feet would allow her, and trying to catch the leaves which were beginning to sprinkle the earth with specks of every hue; and they were still so employed when a servant handed a letter to Ts'eng, who, recognising from the envelope that it was from the magistrate, opened it with an expression of nervous anxiety. His trepidation, however, turned into pleasure, as he read as follows:—

"With great respect I beg to invite you to-morrow at noon to the still clear waters of unmeasurable depth, to enjoy the delights of poetry and the wine-cup. As our galley shall glide through the crystal waves of the lake, we will watch the floating leaves strike her gentle sides; and when we have exhausted our songs, and drained the cup of our delights, we will turn our prow towards the shore."

This invitation was one of those smiles of fortune which had a strangely exhilarating effect on Ts'eng's variable temperament, and he hurried off to his study in the highest spirits to accept it.

"Reverently," he wrote, "I return answer to your jade-like epistle. What can surpass the calm beauty of the lake by moonlight or the tragic aspect of its waves in storm and rain? Your honour having deigned to command my presence on your stately boat, I, as in duty bound, will seize whip to follow you. My paltry literary attainments you will, I fear, find infinitely deficient; and I am much afraid that I shall weary you with my efforts to express in verse my admiration for the mountains and lake."

The day of the magistrate's picnic opened bright and fine, and with commendable punctuality Ts'eng and his fellow-guests assembled at the landing-place, to which usually dreary spot their silk and satin robes and highly coloured skull-caps gave an unwonted air of gaiety. The last to arrive was the host, who, on dismounting from his sedan, bowed collectively and repeatedly to his friends, lifting his joined hands to his forehead as if in supplication, and then bending low in an attitude of humble adoration. His twelve guests returned his saluta-

tion with supple knees and effusive tokens of respect. These ceremonies accomplished, the whole party embarked on the barge. The vessel was one of the best of its kind, but was "a bark to brook no mighty sea." The two masts were innocent of sails, and were burdened only with flags, setting forth in large character the rank and titles of the magistrate. The forepart was decked over, and formed the abode night and day of the crew. Aft this forecastle was an open space, extending to midships, where arose a large and luxuriously furnished deck-house. The window-frames were prettily painted and adorned with wood-carving, while at the portal were suspended painted-glass lanterns, from which hung fringes and tassels. Inside, chairs, tables, and a divan afforded abundant accommodation; and round the room were ranged stands on which stood rare and curiously trained plants in costly porcelain pots.

At the word *K'aich'uen* ("unmoor the ship"), given by the magistrate, the crew, with the help of a crowd of idlers on the wharf, launched the vessel into the deep. The island to which they were bound was about a mile from the shore, and thitherwards the crew, with that happy absence of all signs of hurry which belongs to orientals, to whom telegraphs and railways are unknown, impelled the craft by slow and deliberate strokes of their long sweeping oars. On landing, the magistrate led the way to a Buddhist temple which stood on a platform of rocks overlooking the lake. No more appropriate spot could possibly have been chosen for the occasion. The view over the still waters of the lake, dotted here and there with verdure-clad islets of every shape, was indescribably

beautiful ; and the temple, which in its arrangements and adornments resembled rather a temple of the god of pleasure than of the ascetic Buddha, supplied all that was necessary to minister to the wants of the magistrate and his friends.

With the help of the priests the feast was quickly spread, and with sharpened appetites the guests sat down to the excellent cheer provided for them. Merrily the wine went round, and under its influence Ts'eng spirits, which had been encouraged by the marked attention shown him by the magistrate and Tso, rose considerably. Even the proposition, ingeniously made by Tso towards the end of the feast, that they should amuse themselves by verse-making, had only a slight depressing effect upon him. At any other time the thought of having to submit extempore compositions to the criticism of twelve judges would have reduced him to trembling fear ; but now, as the themes were given out, he seized his pencil and hazarded stanzas which, though they saved him from the accustomed penalty of drinking off three cups of wine, brought the magistrate rapidly round to Tso's estimate of his literary ability.

But the significant glances which were exchanged between the two observant friends were quite lost upon Ts'eng, who talked more and laughed louder than anybody else ; and finally, on their return, he made his adieux to his host and companions, and turned homewards flattered and self-satisfied. The night, for it was late, was fine and warm, and as he sauntered on his way, he recalled with pleasure the compliments which had been paid him and the smart things he had said. As he approached his house, however, these grateful cogita-

tions were interrupted by the sound of angry voices, which, on advancing, he perceived were centred at his own doorway. His presence produced a momentary lull in the storm of angry abuse.

"What is all this about ?" he demanded, rather for something to say than for the sake of information : for, as a matter of fact, the voices of the disputants had been so high that he was already fully aware of the cause of quarrel between two of his servants, Tan and Le, and an old pedlar, who now stood breathless with passion before him.

"The matter, your honour ! Why, this old rogue wants to cheat us out of a hundred cash for these two trumpery rice-bowls, the like of which we could buy anywhere for fifty !"

"May your words choke you, you idle, good-for nothing vagabonds !" shouted the old man, trembling with anger, and shaking his fist at the speaker. "Eighty cash I gave for them at Soo-chow ; and after having carried them on my bamboo all these miles, am I to sell them to you for less than they cost me ?"

At any other time Ts'eng would have avoided all participation in the quarrel, and would probably have hastened to put himself beyond the reach of the angry voices. But the magistrate's wine was still potent in him, and he felt disposed to let his servants see that when he was so minded he could face even so formidable an adversary as an angry old pedlar.

"I cannot have you making such a disturbance at my door," he said, with a wave of the hand, which was meant to be haughty ; "nor can I have my servants abused by a man like you. So be off, and take the price they offer you for the bowls."

But the waves of the old man's wrath were too high to be stilled by a word from Ts'eng, and he turned fiercely on that young gentleman—

"Who are you," he cried, "that you should tell me what to take and what to leave? Because you got a degree through your uncle's favouritism, you think yourself entitled to dictate to me, do you? Nay, don't pretend to be angry; you know what I say is true, and other people know it also. Did I not hear young Mr Tso charge you with it in the street of Longevity the other day? and did I not see you, instead of facing him, sneak away like a whipped cur?"

The greater the truth the more bitter the sting. The pedlar's words cut Ts'eng like a whip, and the anger which rose in his breast, being supported by his borrowed courage, he seized the old man by the throat, and with a violent shove threw him backwards on the pathway. Having accomplished this heroic feat, he turned to his servants with an expression which said plainly, "See what I can do when I am really roused."

Catching his cue, the servants assumed attitudes of astonished admiration.

"Hai-yah," said one, "your honour's anger is more terrible than a lion's rage!"

"If he had only known the measure of your honour's courage," said the other, "he would have mounted a tiger's back rather than anger you."

Pleased and triumphant, Tse'ng turned to take another look at his fallen victim, when, to his horror and alarm, he saw him lying silent, motionless, and death-like on the spot where he had fallen. Instantly his assumed air of brag-gadocio left him, the blood fled from his flushed cheeks, and in

the twinkling of an eye there passed through his mind a vision of himself branded as a murderer, carried before the magistrate, imprisoned, tortured, and beheaded. The vision, momentary though it was, was enough to rack his nervous temperament with fearful terrors; and forgetful of his former attitude, he threw himself on the ground by the prostrate pedlar, imploring him to rouse himself, and calling on his servants to help him raise the apparently lifeless man.

But the servants were nearly as unnerved as their master; and it was with great difficulty that the three men carried their victim into the doorkeeper's room. There Golden-lilies, who had been disturbed by the noise, found the three men helplessly gazing at the senseless form of the old man. Hastily sending one servant for cold water, and another for a fan, she took her place by the bedside, and having unfastened the pedlar's collar, turned to her husband to ask an explanation of the affair. As well as his confused mind would let him, he told his story with tolerable accuracy. Only in one place did he kick over the traces of truth, and that was when he roundly asserted that he had not used violence towards the sufferer. "I merely," said he, "laid my hand upon his shoulder, and it was while starting back in a nervous tremor that his foot slipped on the pavement and down he fell." To the servants who had now returned Ts'eng appealed for confirmation of this statement, and received from them a warm verbal support of this very new story; alas! how different a one from that in which he had gloried but a few moments before!

Meanwhile Golden-lilies was sprinkling the old man's face with

the water, and gently fanning him, in response to which judicious treatment he opened his eyes. At first his gaze was strange and wild, but presently he recognised those about him; and to Ts'eng's infinite relief, asked where he was, and what had happened. Returning consciousness gave life to his formerly death-like features, and the recognition of it produced a no less change in Ts'eng's countenance. The vision which had passed through his mind when he thought the old man was dead, had haunted him still, and no effort would prevent the pictures his imagination had conjured up from returning to his mental sight. Now he could thrust them on one side as a man throws off a nightmare; and in his delight he seized the awakened pedlar's hand, and would have shaken it wildly had not Golden-lilies warned him to do nothing of the kind. By degrees the old man recovered his recollection of all that had passed: and when a cup of tea had still further revived him, Ts'eng led him to the divan in the reception-hall, while wine was warmed for his benefit. Again and again Ts'eng expressed his regret at the accident; and when the old man insisted on starting homewards, lest he should be too late for the ferry-boat across the lake, his host presented him, as a peace-offering, with two ounces of silver and a roll of silk, neatly packed away in one of Golden-lilies' baskets. When the door was closed on his guest, Ts'eng betook himself to Golden-lilies' apartments with an intense feeling of relief. His mind was incapable of perspective; and in all affairs of life the present loomed so large to his mental sight, that everything else was invisible. At this moment his escape from a great peril gave a nervous elasticity to his

spirits which contrasted painfully with his abject dejection of a few hours before. Golden-lilies, rightly divining the frame of mind in which he was likely to be, had prepared for him a soothing repast of chicken's liver, sweetmeats, and *ginseng*, with a pot of some excellent Soo-chow wine to wash them down. Though not hungry, Ts'eng was feverish and thirsty, and the quantity of wine he took was quite out of proportion to the quantity of viands he ate. However, Golden-lilies' end was attained. He was revived and strengthened, and she even did not object to his becoming somewhat excited. It was better than seeing him leaden-eyed and trembling. By degrees, under the influence of the wine, he began to explain away the slip which he had been so glad to invent to account for the pedlar's fall and was just describing the pot-valiant part he had played, when Tan hurriedly entered with the news that Lai, the ferryman, was outside, and insisted on seeing his honour at once. The man's face and manner were so perturbed that all the beneficial effects of Golden-lilies' feast vanished, and she turned to see her lord and master again pale and limp.

"What is the matter?" asked Ts'eng, as the ferryman, without waiting for an invitation, entered the room. This man was one of Ts'eng's many *bete-noirs*. He was a rough, determined fellow, with a truculent face, and a no less truculent manner. He had, further, an unconcealed contempt for Ts'eng, and lost no opportunities of showing it. That this man, therefore, should be the bearer of what Ts'eng instinctively knew to be bad tidings, was an additional bitterness to the pill.

"I have brought you bad news,

Mr Ts'eng, and thought I would just step in and tell you, before going on to the magistrate," added the man ominously.

"What is your news?" said Ts'eng, in vain attempting to suppress his apprehensions.

"The old pedlar, Ting, whom you threw down on the pavement, is dead."

If the executioner's axe had at that moment descended on the neck of poor Ts'eng he could not have looked more bereft of life than he did as he threw himself back in his chair at these words. For some seconds his power of speech failed him and at last he gasped out—

"What do you mean? How did he die? Not that it matters to me," he added, with a violent effort to appear calm.

"He came down to my boat to cross the lake," said Lai, looking steadfastly on his victim, "and after we had gone a short way across he appeared to turn faint and giddy, and at last he tumbled off the seat into the bottom of the boat. As quickly as I could I put down my oars to help him up, when I saw it was something worse than a faint, and he had just time to tell me of the scuffle at your door, and that you had pushed him down and killed him, when he fell back dead."

"It is a lie," screamed Ts'eng; "when he left this house he was quite well."

"Well, all I know is," said Lai, "that he is now dead, and that when in the act of death he said you were his murderer. These are some things," he added, holding up Golden-lilies' basket with the roll of silk, "which he had in his hand when he came into the boat."

Ts'eng gazed at these evidences of the truth of the man's story with a fixed and glassy stare, while poor

Golden-lilies stood by with her face in her hands weeping bitterly. In one short day all that had been pleasurable in their existence had been exchanged for blank despair. The morning had opened with bright hopes and brilliant expectations, and now the evening had set in with a black darkness of misery that crushed them to the ground. For some seconds not another word was uttered. But presently Golden-lilies went over to her husband, and taking his hand in hers, whispered something in his ear, which brought a ray of intelligence into his face.

"Yes, you are right; I will try," he faltered.

"You and I have known one another a long time, Lai," he said, "and I am sure you would not do an injury to an old neighbor and friend. This is a bad business, and I swear to you I am not to blame. His foot slipped, and he fell down. It will do you no good to tell any one about it; and if you will keep the secret, I will willingly pay you handsomely. Oh, promise me that you will," said the wretched man, throwing himself at Lai's feet.

Here was a pretty position for a graduate and an expectant mandarin! On his knees at the feet of a common fellow, who did not know one character from another, and who knew as much about Confucius as he did about Mahomet!

"Well, Mr Ts'eng," said Lai, "I don't want to do anything to injure you, but the man died in my boat; so that unless I can explain his death, I shall be charged with the murder."

"Where is he?" gasped poor Ts'eng.

"In my boat," said Lai. "I have anchored it in a quiet place up the river, so that no one should go on board."

"Oh, if you will only keep the matter a secret," said Ts'eng, rising as his hopes rose, "I will give you any sum you ask."

"But what am I to do with the body?" hesitated Lai.

"You can bury it in my graveyard, which is, as you know, on the bank of the lake. The night is very dark, and the wall round the yard is high, so that no one will see you."

"But I cannot do it by myself."

"No; but I will send two of my servants with you. If you will only do this for me, I will be your slave for the rest of my life."

"Well," said Lai, after a few moments' apparent consideration, "if you will give me money enough to set up a fish-shop, I don't mind doing this job to oblige you."

"Gladly I will," said Ts'eng; "and now I will call the servants." So having summoned Tan and Le, he repeated to them the story told by Lai. With many appeals to their good feeling and sense of gratitude, he begged them to do him this service, promising that he would give them substantial rewards if they consented. After some hesitation and discussion, the men came to terms, and went off with the ferryman, armed with spades.

The three men stole out like conspirators into the street, and, following devious lanes and unfrequented ways, they reached the boat, snugly moored under the bank of the lake.

"Take care where you go," said Lai, as they stepped on board, "and just sit where you are while I get to the oars." The men, who were beginning to feel nervous and frightened, needed no second bidding; and after half an hour's pull, Lai, who knew the lake as well by night as by day, ran the boat ashore at Ts'eng's family graveyard.

"Now come here and help me with the old man," said he, as soon as he had secured the boat to the bank.

"Why, he is all wet," said Tan, as he helped to lift the body.

"I know," answered Lai; "he fell into the water when he turned giddy, and I had to pull him out."

"You did not say anything about that up at the house," said Tan.

"Well, I tell you now, and that is enough, is it not?" answered Lai, sullenly.

With considerable difficulty the three men groped their way into the graveyard bearing their ghastly burden, and at once set to work to dig a grave. Every now and then the sound of passing footsteps made them pause in their work; and once they were evidently heard, for through the darkness there came the challenge—"Who is that in Mr Ts'eng's graveyard?" But presently the challenger went on, and before long the dead body was safely laid to rest, and the soil beaten flat over it. So soon as the work was done, the men made their way hastily to the boat, being glad enough to escape from the dark, silent, and ghostly cemetery. On their return they found Ts'eng anxiously awaiting them. Again and again he made them assure him that no one had seen them, and as often he made them swear that they would keep his secret faithfully. That night the two servants went to bed rich men, while Ts'eng retired to Golden-lilies' apartment to try to lose his consciousness of misery in sleep. But this was beyond his power; occasionally he dozed, but only to dream that the pedlar was standing in the street accusing him aloud of his murder, and then with a violent start and scream he awoke. Poor Golden-lilies fared very little

better ; and when morning dawned they both arose, weary and unrefreshed, to meet they knew not what, and to face their difficulties with the best courage they could muster.

The sight even of the two confederate servants was a torture to poor Ts'eng, who knew, or fancied he knew, that they were watching him to see how a murderer would behave himself ; and were mentally speculating on what would happen if the secret they held in their possession ever became known. In the same way every incident which occurred bore reference in his imagination to the terrible event of the preceding evening. Even little Primrose's innocent questions of why he looked so pale, and why he would not come out with her into the garden as usual, were more than he could endure ; and the child was promptly handed over to her nurse, who had orders to keep her quiet and at a distance. As to his being able to eat any breakfast, that was quite out of the question ; and if there had been any chance of his having an appetite for dinner, it was dissipated by a note he received from a neighbour, who wrote to say, that in passing the Ts'eng cemetery on the preceding night, he had heard the sound of pick-axes and shovels, and that to his question of "Who was there?" he had failed to get a reply. The writer excused himself for not having gone into the graveyard, by pleading the lateness of the hour and the darkness of the night. But he "humbly ventured to recommend that Ts'eng should look into the matter."

With a look of indescribable misery, Ts'eng handed this letter to Golden-lilies, who throughout the morning, partly, possibly, because hers was not the head in danger, had shown a much bolder front to

fortune than her lord and master had been able to do, but also, doubtless, because, though of the softer sex, she was made of sterner stuff.

"Sit down and answer the letter at once," she said, "and, while thanking him for his vigilance" ("Curse him for it," muttered Ts'eng), "say that you will send at once to make inquiries."

Ts'eng did as he was bid, and then relapsed into blank misery. Possibly he was under the delusion that remorse for having taken the life of a fellow-creature was the mainspring of his mental agony ; but had he analysed his feelings carefully, he would have found that that feeling hardly entered at all into his cogitations. Blank fear it was that oppressed him ; fear of being dragged off to prison as a murderer—fear of having to face the magistrate who had so lately entertained him—fear of being tortured if he did not confess, and fear, if he did, of the executioner's fatal weapon. If he had been capable of diving into his inner feelings, he would have known that an assurance that his crime would never be discovered, had that been possible, would have lifted the whole weight from his overburdened soul ; but now, while at one moment in his terror he almost wished that it might be brought to light at once, that he might escape from his torturing suspense—at another, he tried to buoy himself up with the hope that it would never be found out. One thing he had determined to do, and that was, as soon as he had settled with Lai, who was to call after dusk, he would go himself to the graveyard to make quite sure that the work was well done. Much though he hated and feared the ferryman, he now had a morbid longing for his arrival ; and when that worthy ap-

peared, he received him with open arms.

Lai was as undemonstrative and self-possessed as Ts'eng was effusive and flurried ; and a glance at that unfortunate young gentleman was enough to convince his visitor that he had the game in his hands.

"Well, Mr. Ts'eng," he began, as he seated himself uninvited, "I have come according to arrangement to settle about last night's job."

"Yes, yes ; don't say anything more about *that*," said Ts'eng, shuddering. "I have here two hundred taels of silver, which I hope you will accept from me."

"That is not enough," answered Lai : "do you think I would have buried a murdered man——"

"Oh, don't, don't. Well, come, I will give you another fifty taels ; surely that will satisfy you," said Ts'eng, who, though anxious to quiet Lai, had an intense dislike to parting with his money.

"Now, look here, Mr. Ts'eng," said Lai deliberately, and with a threatening countenance, "if you don't give me down three hundred taels, good weight, I shall go on at once to the magistrate's to——"

"Say no more you shall have the three hundred. And now, I have something to ask of you—I want you to row me up to the graveyard and show me where *it* is."

"Very well," replied Lai ; "there will not be any one wanting to cross the lake to-night, so we can start now if you like."

"Is it dark enough !" asked Ts'eng.

"It is so dark that you might run into your best friend's arms without his knowing you ; and unless you have the eyes of a cat or an owl, you won't see much when you get there."

With much caution the expedi-

tion was made, and Ts'eng satisfied himself, as far as the darkness would allow, that every care had been taken to make the newly made grave as much like the surrounding soil as possible. He returned, therefore, with his mind now at rest, and as days went by and nothing serious occurred to arouse his fears, he gradually recovered much of his ordinary placidity. Not that he altogether escaped annoyance ; for Lai, luxuriating in his suddenly acquired wealth, showed a tendency to break out into riot, and in his cups he allowed himself to talk of his friendship with "young Ts'eng" in a way which, coupled with his sudden wealth, made his neighbours wonder and gossip. From some of these Ts'eng learnt what was going on. The bare idea of his alliance with Lai becoming a subject of tittle-tattle was torture to him, and he took an opportunity of begging the ferryman to be more cautious. Being not unwilling to worry poor Ts'eng, Lai affected to be indifferent to anything people might say, and adopted altogether so defiant a tone, that he brought Ts'eng once again to his knees.

To add to Ts'eng's anxieties, little Primrose was seized one evening with a violent headache and every symptom of high fever. For three days the child lay tossing to and fro with burning skin, parched mouth, and throbbing head ; and when, at the end of that time, these symptoms abated, their origin was made plain by an eruption which was unmistakably that of smallpox. The doctor who was summoned felt the pulse of the sufferer and prescribed *ginseng*, and broth made of Cassia shoots, in accordance with the dictum of the highest authorities. But to this orthodox treatment the disease declined to submit. The virulence

of the distemper was unchecked ; and though Golden-lilies paid numerous visits to the shrine of the Goddess of Smallpox, and spent large sums of money in the purchase of offerings to that deity, the child daily and hourly grew worse, until the doctor had unwillingly to acknowledge that he could do nothing more. It is difficult to say which of the parents during these dark days suffered the greatest mental agony. Golden-lilies' distress was that of an agonised mother, tortured by the fear of losing her only child ; while Ts'eng's grief at the possible loss of his fondling, was aggravated by a superstitious belief that his own crime had brought this misery upon him. Even the doctor, accustomed as he was to displays of affection, was touched by the grief of the young couple, and, forgetful of all professional etiquette, he recommended Ts'eng, as a last hope, to send for a quack practitioner, residing at a town some twenty miles away, who had, he said, acquired a reputation for the successful treatment of similar desperate cases.

Eagerly catching at this straw, Ts'eng wrote a note begging the doctor "to deign to visit his straw hut, and to bend his omniscient mind to the case of his insignificant child," and bade Tan carry it at once to its destination. But since the night when Ts'eng had been obliged to place his secret in the hands of his two servants, their manner had been less respectful than formerly, and sometimes even defiant. To Tan the present mission was evidently distasteful ; and it was only by the promise of a handsome reward that Ts'eng at last succeeded in getting him off. During the whole afternoon of that day, time seemed to the watchers to stand still ; and towards night, when they hoped that

the expected doctor might appear, every approaching horse's hoof brought hope, which as often was destined to be disappointed as the tramp died away again in the distance. Meanwhile Primrose grew worse and worse. As night came on unconsciousness set in ; and just before dawn the little thing gave a deep sigh and passed into the land of shades.

Both Ts'eng and Golden-lilies were completely crushed by the ruin of all their hopes ; and when Tan made his appearance towards noon, they scarcely heeded his explanation that he had waited all night at the doctor's house, expecting his return from a distant professional visit, and that, when morning came, he had thought it best to come back, even without the doctor, to report his want of success.

Much sympathy was felt with the sorrow-stricken parents at the loss of their only child, and many were the visits of condolence which Ts'eng received during the ensuing days. Among others, a relation called, who, after having expressed his sympathy, added with evident reluctance,—"There is a matter, my brother, about which I feel bound to speak to you, although I am most unwilling to trouble you about ordinary affairs at such a time as this."

"Please don't let my affliction interfere with any matter of business," said Ts'eng.

"Well, the fact is," said his guest, "that the other morning—it was, I remember, the morning after your little one departed for the 'Yellow Springs'—one of my servants came home very much the worse for wine and opium ; and on my asking him for an explanation of his conduct, he said that a man of yours named Tan had kept him up all night drinking and smoking

at an opium-tavern in the town. Can this be true?"

"It is quite impossible," replied Ts'eng; "for the whole of that night Tan was twenty miles away, at the house of a doctor to whom I had sent him."

"Well, I have brought my man," said the other, "that he may repeat his story in your presence, and that, if necessary, we should confront him with Tan."

"Let him come in, by all means," said Ts'eng.

In obedience to a summons Tan's accuser entered the room. He was a dissipated-looking fellow. His face was thin and drawn, and of that peculiar mahogany hue which is begotten by long-continued indulgence in the opium-pipe. From the same habit his teeth were blackened, and the whites of his eyes looked as though they had been smoke-dried. On entering he bowed his knee, and then proceeded to give a circumstantial account of the night in question. At first Ts'eng had treated his accusations with contempt; but the remarkably coherent manner in which the man retailed his story, suggested doubts to his mind, which tortured him with misgivings. Without waiting for the conclusion of the man's statement, therefore, he summoned Tan to face his accuser. With a glance Tan took in the position of affairs, and having with a considerable effort mastered the uneasiness which the crisis provoked, he stood ready to brazen it out.

"This man tells me," said Ts'eng, "that instead of carrying my letter to the doctor the other evening, you passed the night drinking and smoking with him at a tavern in the town. Is this true or false?"

"It is false, your honour; and I can only suppose that this man, to

whom I have only spoken once or twice in my life, must have invented this story out of spite, or in order to shield, in some way which I do not understand, his own conduct from blame."

"Are not you ashamed to tell such a lie in the sight of heaven?" said the man, quite taken aback by the coolness of the denial; "but fortunately I have some evidence of the truth of my story, which you will find it hard to meet. Did you deliver your master's letter to the doctor?"

"Certainly I did."

"That is curious; for I happen to have here a letter which I found on the floor of the room we occupied at the tavern, and which I strongly suspect is the letter you were intrusted with. Will you see for yourself, sir, whether this is your letter or not?" said the man, handing to Ts'eng an unopened envelope, which he produced from his sleeve.

With a trembling hand Ts'eng took the letter, and at a glance recognised it as the one he had written with such eager haste, and with such a longing hope. The thought that but for the treachery of the wretch before him his little Primrose might have been still with him was more than he could bear. For a moment he fell back in his chair with quivering lips and cheeks as pale as death, and then as suddenly the blood rushed headlong through his veins, and with wild eyes and uttering savage curses he sprang from his chair and rushed upon Tan, who, accepting the turn things had taken, had fallen on his knees, and was performing the *kotow* with every token of humble submission.

With wild fury Ts'eng kicked at the bowing head of his follower, and might probably have been charged a second time with man-

slaughter, had not his guest dragged him by main force back to his chair and dismissed Tan from the room.

It was a long time before Ts'eng could recover his composure. His nerves were completely unstrung, and he trembled like a leaf. His friend, who was a determined fatalist, used every argument at his command to soothe his remorse and regrets. He pointed out that Heaven having doomed the death of little Primrose, nothing could have prevented it ; that even if the doctor had come, he could not have lengthened out her life one moment beyond the time allowed her by the Fates ; and that, therefore, though Tan's conduct had been infamous, it had not in any way influenced the result. "I quite admit that the man deserves punishment for his disobedience, and I would suggest that you should now order him to be bamboozed on the spot. It will satisfy justice, and will, at the same time, be a relief to your feelings."

"It will certainly be a relief to me to see the fiendish brute suffer," said Ts'eng, "and it shall be done at once." So saying, he directed three of his servants to seize Tan and to flog him in the courtyard. The men, who were evidently not unused to the kind of business, dragged the offender in and stretched him face downwards on the stones of the yard. One then sat on his shoulders, another on his ankles, while a third, being provided with half a split bamboo, prepared to inflict chastisement. At a signal from Ts'eng the concave side of the bamboo, descended on the back of the thighs of the culprit with tremendous force and effect. The wretched man's frame quivered throughout, and as blow after blow fell he uttered cries for mercy, and bitter groans which

would have appealed to the heart of any one whose feelings were not deadened by mental tortures. But Ts'eng, in his present unHINGED frame of mind, had no mercy, and if a restraining hand had not been outstretched he would have allowed the wretched man to die under the lash. As it was, his friend interfered, and warned Ts'eng that the punishment was becoming excessive. To this remonstrance Ts'eng yielded, and the blows were stayed. But Tan, whose cries had gradually died away into silence, remained motionless, and unconscious of the mercy which had been extended to him. Seeing his condition, the servants carried him off to his bed, where, under the influence of restoratives, he was by degrees brought back to life. But it was many days before he was able to move ; and even then his weakness was so great, and his nerves so shattered, that he had the air of a man recovering from a long illness. If, however, Ts'eng had hoped that the punishment would have produced penitence, he was much mistaken. At the best of times Tan's temper was not good. He was by nature morose and revengeful, and a certain want of courage in his composition disposed him towards deceit. With regaining strength he brooded more and more over the treatment he had received, and he vowed a fierce vow that for every blow that had been inflicted on him he would exact a tenfold vengeance.

Meanwhile the anxiety, grief, and excitement of the last few days had reduced Ts'eng to the verge of illness, and his general debility added a new cause of anxiety to poor Golden-lilies, already overburdened bosom. So serious was his condition, that she persuaded him to pay a visit to his brother at Soo-chow, for the

sake of the change of scene and air. The remedy was exactly what he required; and after a fortnight's absence, he wrote to say that he was so much better that he should follow his letter at the interval of a day.

By this time Tan was able to walk, and so soon as he was assured of the date of his master's return, he absented himself from the house for the rest of the day. Towards evening he returned, and though his mood was exultant, he was strictly reticent as to his doings while abroad. His fellow-servants were too busy to be inquisitive; and as his enfeebled condition still prevented him from serving, he was left to himself.

The next day, towards evening, as Ts'eng's chair turned into the road in which his house stood, two police-runners, who had been sitting on a door-step opposite, rose and crossed over to Ts'eng's gateway. At the familiar shout of the chair-coolies, *Tung-chia lai-lo* ("The master has come"), the big folding-doors were thrown open, and the bearers were on the point of crossing the threshold, when one of the policemen advanced, and producing a warrant, ordered the coolies to stop and Ts'eng to dismount. Instinctively Ts'eng obeyed, and was for the first moment or two so dazed that he hardly seemed to be aware what was going on. By degrees the dress of the policeman, with his red-tasselled official cap and long robe, helped him to realise the situation, and he gasped out, "What is the warrant for?" "Murder," answered the man, as he laid his hand on Ts'eng's arm. It was fortunate for Ts'eng that he did so, for without some support he would have fallen prone to the ground. As it was, it was as much as the two men could do to support his tot-

tering steps for a few yards, and then his legs refused to move, and his head fell forward on his chest as he dropped off into a dead faint. Seeing the condition of their master, the coolies brought forward his sedan, and the policemen accepting their aid, put the inanimate form of their prisoner into the chair, and directed the coolies to carry it to the prison at the district magistrate's *yamun*. The distance was not great, and the coolies, anxious to save their master from additional shame, hurried fast through the streets. On arriving at the *yamun*, they entered the front gates, and were then directed by the policemen to turn off to the left through a door, the insignia of which, a painted tiger's head, with huge staring eyes and widely opened jaws, marked it as the entrance to the prison. Passing through this they entered a narrow passage, at the end of which was a courtyard, where the coolies were ordered to put down their load. It had never been the fate of either of these two men to find themselves within a prison before; and the sights which met their eyes made them shudder to think what their master's feelings would be when he awoke to consciousness and found himself in such a place.

In the courtyard itself, groups of prisoners, bound with heavy chains, were huddled together, whose appearance was enough to carry horror and compassion to the minds of all but those case-hardened by habit. Their faces were thin and worn, and bore the cadaverous hue which is commonly begotten by want and foul air; while the listless expression of their eyes and the languid movements of their limbs furnished additional testimony to the state of weakness to which they had been reduced. The condition of their

persons was filthy in the extreme. Skin-disease in every form was rife among them ; and it was plain that a rich harvest was ripening for death within the walls of the jail. As the poor wretches crowded round the sedan-chair to see who could be the new arrival who came in such state, the coolies instinctively drew back ; and if the head jailor had not made his appearance at the moment, and with a sweeping blow and a curse driven his charges backwards, the still insensible Ts'eng would have been left in his chair. Scarcely less repulsive than the prisoners was the jailor, but for different reasons. There were no signs of want or ill health about him, nor was he dirtier than Chinamen of his class generally are, but a harder and more malignant face than his it is impossible to imagine. And that these outward signs were but the reflection of the savage cruelty of his character, was proved by the look of abject terror with which the prisoners regarded him. In a voice thick and grating, he ordered two of his myrmidons to manacle Ts'eng, and then to carry him into one of the cells which formed the eastern and western sides of the courtyard. Even from the outside these places looked more like wild-beast dens than the dwellings of human beings. The roofs were low, and a double row of strong wooden palisades, reaching from the ground to the eaves, guarded them in front. Into one of these dungeons, over whose portal was inscribed, as if in bitter mockery, the motto, "The misery of to-day may be the happiness of to-morrow," Ts'eng was carried. The coolies, determined to see the last of their master, followed him in. As they reached the door they recoiled as though a blast of a charnel-house had rushed out against them. Never were human

senses assailed by an atmosphere more laden with pestilence and death. After a moment's hesitation, however, they mustered up courage to enter, and waited just long enough to see their master laid on the raised wooden platform which extended along the side of the den. As they were not allowed to do anything for him, and as the turnkeys promised that he should be looked after, they escaped into the open air.

True to their word, and possibly in the hope of a reward, the turnkeys applied water to Ts'eng's face and head, and succeeded in re-awakening life. At first he began to move restlessly, and to moan piteously, and then opened his lack-lustre eyes. For a moment or two he saw nothing, but by degrees his power of conscious sight returned, and he looked wildly round the cell. His first impression was that he had passed into a land of eternal punishment, such as he had heard Buddhists speak of, and he shrieked aloud for mercy. The sight, however, of the policeman who had served the warrant on him, recalled to his recollection the circumstances of his arrest ; and as his real condition dawned upon him, he sank back on the stage, overcome with horror and despair. How long he lay in this condition he knew not, but he was aroused from it by the entrance of the prisoners from the courtyard, who were being driven in for the night. Already the platform was full enough, but with these new arrivals the overcrowding became excessive ; and as the weary wretches struggled with their little remaining strength for the places nearest to the grating, they jostled Ts'eng, and fought across him like wild beasts, adding a new horror to his misery. The atmosphere of the den became also even fouler than

before; and what with the heat and stench, Ts'eng began to feel feverish and ill. His head ached fiercely, his skin burnt, and his mouth was dry and parched. In his agony he called aloud for water; and though at first his cries were disregarded, his importunity prevailed with a prisoner less callous than the rest, who filled a tin mug from a tub which stood in the middle of the cell. The act of moving the water caused a fetid stench to rise from the slimy surface of the reservoir; and so foul were the contents of the mug, that, though burning with fever, Ts'eng could scarcely make up his mind to taste them. But thirsty men will swallow anything; and at last he drained the cup to its dregs, and even returned it to his benefactor with grateful thanks.

All night long he tossed about, burning with fever and tortured by delirium. His restlessness earned for him the anathemas of his fellow-prisoners, who, having been long inured to the foul atmosphere of the den, slept in comparative quiet. As daylight dawned the figures about him mixed themselves up with his delirious dreams, which, however, could add nothing to the horrors actually presented to his eye. Shocking as had been the aspect of his fellow-prisoners in the courtyard the day before, it was nothing to be compared to the condition of many of those whose weakness had prevented them from groping their way into the outer air. One group of these were huddled together at the end of the platform, whose emaciated bodies and look of fierce agony told only too plainly that they were starving. One of their number had already

been released from his tortures by death; and the rats, more conscious of the fact than the jailers, were gnawing at the only fleshy parts of his skeleton-like form. A like fate was the only portal of escape left to those about him, and eagerly they desired to meet it. Ever and anon sleep relieved Ts'eng's eyes from the contemplation of these horrors, and then in his dreams, as though by a law of contraries, he wandered in the asphodel meadows of Elysium, surrounded by every object calculated to gratify the imagination and delight the senses. The transition from these visions to a perception of his actual surroundings was sharp and bitter. In moments of reason he sought for the means of escape from the terrors of his present cell. He knew enough of prisons to know that it was in the power of the turnkeys to mitigate the sufferings of their charges, and he knew that money was the key to open the door of their sympathies. He remembered that when arrested he had some ten or twelve ounces of silver in his pocket, and he made up his mind to try the effect of these on the turnkey when he should come to open the cell in the morning. At last that happy moment arrived. The man who had turned the key on him the night before now threw open the door, and Ts'eng, in company with most of his fellow-prisoners, crawled out into the fresher air of the courtyard. As the turnkey passed through the yard, Ts'eng accosted him, and in exchange for the contents of his purse, procured a breakfast which was the feast of an epicure compared to the fare dealt out to the common herd.'

¹ If any should think this description of a Chinese prison overdrawn, we would refer them to 'China,' by G. Wiugrove Cook, 1858, 'China,' by Archdeacon Gray, 1878; and 'The Golden Chersonese,' by Miss Bird, 1882, *cum multis aliis*.

Meanwhile Golden-lilies' night had been scarcely more pleasantly spent than her husband's; and to her also had occurred the idea that it would be possible to buy with money the consideration of the jailer. While it was yet early, therefore, she collected all the available cash in the house, and set out in her sedan-chair for the prison. The head jailer received the announcement of her name with a cynical smile. He had expected that she would come and knew well the object of her visits. Accustomed to such interviews, and to the readiest means of turning them to the best account, he at first assumed a hard and unrelaxing manner, and yielded only to Golden-lilies' entreaties, when he had drained her resources. The upshot, however, of the visit was, that Ts'eng was summoned before the jailer, and was told that, in consideration of his being untried, he should be removed to another courtyard, "where," said the jailer, with something approaching a smile, "I hope you will be more comfortable than you probably were last night." In fulfilment of this concession, Ts'eng was led off to a neighbouring compound, which appeared almost clean and healthy in comparison with the one he had just left. The prisoners in it also were fewer in number, and though they were dirty and unshaven, they were evidently of a higher class than Ts'eng's late companions. They welcomed Ts'eng with some attempts at conversation, and performed various kindly offices for him, which, in his weak state of health, were more than he had either energy or strength to accomplish for himself. One man in particular, a stout, cheery-looking son of Ham, was very kind and attentive; and as the day wore on, and they began to know more about one another, and the offences

with which they were severally charged, this man did much to lighten the cares of all, and of Ts'eng in particular, to whom he seemed to have taken a liking. Of Ts'eng's prospects—"as I suppose," he said, "you are willing to be liberal with your money,"—he professed to take a hopeful view; while he did not conceal the fact that his own career would in all probability be quickly cut short.

"Instigating a rebellion is not a crime that finds mercy, even though it might be justified, as in my case, by the tyranny of the local mandarins."

"But if you are without hope, how can you possibly be as cheerful as you are?" replied Ts'eng.

"Because I am a philosopher," said Lung—for that was his name; "because I have drunk deep at the fountain which inspired Laotze, Chwang-tsze, and others, and have learnt with them the true value of life and the art of living and dying."

"The men you speak of were heretics," replied Ts'eng, "and went so far as even to speak disrespectfully of our great master Confucius. Nothing but disappointment must follow on faith in such as those."

"You boast yourself in Confucius, do you?" rejoined Lung. "I thought you did when you first came in, by your look of misery. Now tell me, how does he help you in your present difficulty? Which is in the best mental case—you who trust in the stereotyped phrases of that old formalist, or I who follow the kindly lead of the Taouist philosophers? You look on the future life with terrified uncertainty; while I, regarding it in its true light, see in it but a continuance of existence in a new shape."

"These are all fallacies."

"Show me that they are."

"Did not Confucius say, in answer to Ke Lu's question about a future state, 'We do not know about life, and how, then, can we know about anything beyond the grave?' And if Confucius's intelligence stopped short with life, who can possibly hope to peer beyond it?"

"And are you really such a blind follower of the blind as that comes to? Has it never occurred to you to ask yourself whence you came and whither you are going? But I need not put the question to you, for if you had, you would never tremble so at the bare idea of stepping over the brink. To me, the knowledge that the executioner's sword will help me to return to the Great Mother of all things, from whence I came and to which, in common with all created things, I must return, is no unpleasing prospect. I have played my part on this stage. I have dreamed my earthly dream, with its fancies, its nightmares, and its moments of pleasurable excitement, and now I am ready and willing to pass into the loving arms of the 'Abyss Mother.' Here we Taoists have the advantage over you Confucianists. You strut about, talking loudly over the relations between man and man, parents and children, and sovereigns and ministers—all good things in their way—but you forget or close your eyes to the fact that existence does not end with what we call death. You limit your system to the short space of man's life upon earth, while we, overleaping all bounds of time, claim our right to immortality, and step with assurance into the grave."

"That is all very plausible," said Ts'eng, "but you have no evidence that there is any continuance of existence after death. No one has

ever returned to life to give us his experiences, and your creed on this point must of necessity, therefore, be merely an assumption."

"Nay, it is more than that. Do we not see all around us that nothing in creation is ever absolutely destroyed? It suffers ceaseless changing, but always exists. Look at the wood on a fire: it ceases to be wood after the flames have consumed it, but it reappears as smoke and ashes. Look at the leaves which strew the ground in autumn: decay transforms their shapes, but they do but change into mould, which again enters into the life of plants and trees,—and so created things go on for ever."

"That is a kind of reasoning that I don't understand," replied Ts'eng. "If you can produce any positive evidence that there is a future existence, I will believe it; but I cannot accept a faith which is based on an analogy of burnt wood and decayed leaves. And so to call me to take comfort in the contemplation of a future state of happiness, is like telling a hungry man to satisfy his appetite by thinking of a feast, or a man shivering with cold to feel warm by imagining a roaring fire."

"So this is what it comes to; that Confucius serves as a guide through life when a man ought to be able to guide himself, and deserts you just at the moment when, in the face of death, you want some staff to support you, and some hand to lead you. But here comes the jailer, looking more like a demon than ever; he must have bad news for one of us."

At this moment the jailer entered with the list of those whose names had been marked with the vermilion pencil of the emperor for immediate execution, and turning to Lung, he told him, without any unnecessary verbiage, that

his time had come. The seal thus set to the fate of his acquaintance was a severe shock to poor Ts'eng. His tongue refused to speak, and he durst not look on the face of the condemned man. But Lung was quite unmoved.

"You see," he said, addressing Ts'eng, "my race is run, and I only hope that if ever you should be in a like position, you may be enabled to face the future with the same composure that I do, and to place as sure a faith in the loving tenderness of the Great Mother of us all, as that which now supports me."

Ts'eng was too much overcome to utter a word, but wrung his friend's hands, and with weeping eyes watched him led off to be questioned by the judge before being borne to the execution-ground.

This event cast a gloom over the prison for the rest of the day ; and the approach of night, even though it entailed a retreat into the close and fetid atmosphere of the cell, was a relief to all. The next morning, immediately after breakfast, the jailer paid another visit to the courtyard and summoned Ts'eng to appear before the magistrate. The contrast between his last interview with his judge and the present occasion, covered Ts'eng with shame and remorse. As he entered the judgment-hall he scarcely ventured to lift his eyes to his former host, who was seated behind a large table covered with red cloth, attended by secretaries, interpreters, and turnkeys. He thought it just possible that when the magistrate recognised him he would pay him some consideration. But these hopes were rudely dispelled when two of the executioners, who stood at the foot of the dais, taking him by the arms, forced him on his knees. At the

same moment, at a signal from the magistrate, one of the secretaries read out the accusation, in which he was charged with having murdered "a wandering pedlar, named Ting."

"Are you guilty of this charge, or not guilty?" asked the magistrate, in a cold, clear voice.

"Not guilty, your Excellency," said Ts'eng, vaguely hoping that his denial would be sufficient.

"Call the witnesses," said the magistrate ; and to Ts'eng's horror, at a sign from the secretary, Tan stepped forward and fell on his knees.

"Now tell us what you know of this matter," said the magistrate.

Thus adjured, Tan told the whole story from beginning to end, and though he laid great stress on the pressure Ts'eng had put upon him to induce him to help to bury the body, he, on the whole, made his statement plainly and truthfully. Still Ts'eng thought it possible that, if no other evidence was produced, his word would be taken against his servant's,—at all events, the only answer that occurred to his confused mind was a flat denial.

"The whole story, your Excellency, is a lie from beginning to end," he said, "and is invented by this man out of spite, in consequence of my having had occasion to flog him for a gross falsehood and breach of trust." The confident manner in which Ts'eng made this uncompromising assertion, evidently produced a favourable effect on the magistrate, who, turning to Tan, asked—

"Have you any evidence of the truth of your story?"

"Well, your Excellency, I can show you where we buried the body, and where it is at this moment, if it has not been removed."

At these words Ts'eng, who felt the ground slipping from under

him, trembled all over, and would have fallen forward had not a turnkey supported him on his knees. These signs of trepidation were not unmarked by the magistrate, who ordered two policemen to go with Tan to exhume the body, and directed Ts'eng in the meantime to stand on one side. So completely had his nerves now forsaken him, however, that to stand was impossible, and he was therefore allowed to sit huddled up against an angle in the wall at the side of the court. Here he suffered all the mental tortures to which weak and cowardly natures are susceptible. Shame, remorse, and anger all tortured him in turns, and dominating all was the abject terror which possessed him. The knowledge that he was completely in the power of others over whom he had not the slightest influence or control; that he was alone without a single friend to whom to turn for advice or help; that he was guilty of the crime laid to his charge; and that death at the hand of the executioner would in all probability be his fate,—was an instrument which plagued him with such intensity, that it almost bereft him of reason. Rocking himself to and fro, and moaning piteously, he sat the very picture of misery. Other cases were called on and disposed of, but he heard not a word, and was only recalled to consciousness by being dragged once again into the courtyard, and put on his knees before the tribunal. He knew that this meant that Tan had returned, and he instinctively felt that the body of the murdered man was close beside him, but he durst not look round. Almost lifeless, he knelt waiting for the first words, which seemed as though they were never to be uttered. At last they came.

"Have you brought the body?"

"We have, your Excellency," answered Tan, "and here it is; we put it into this coffin as it has been dead for some time; shall we open it?"

"Wait," said the magistrate, who was evidently anxious to avoid that operation if possible, and turning to Ts'eng, he asked, "Do you still deny your guilt?"

"No," replied Ts'eng, who had now lost all hope; "but I did not mean to kill him, it was an accident, indeed it was. Oh, have mercy on me," cried the wretched man, "and spare my life! Punish me in any way, but oh, let me live!"

"Your pitiable cries for mercy," said the magistrate, "only make your conduct worse. You had no compassion on the man you murdered and who now lies there in evidence against you, and I shall therefore have none on you. I sentence you—"

At this moment a sound of voices and a rush of persons were heard at the other end of the courtyard. The magistrate paused and looked up, prepared to inflict the bastinado on the intruders, but their appearance warned him that something unusual had happened. Golden-lilies led the van, and falling on her knees before the magistrate, cried—

"Spare him, spare him, your Excellency! it is all a mistake. Ting is not dead, but is here."

At the sound of Golden-lilies' voice, Ts'eng awoke from the trance into which he had fallen at the magistrate's rebuke, and turned his lack-lustre eyes upon his wife. Her eager look gave him confidence, and following the direction of her outstretched finger, he beheld the old pedlar on his knees. But he was still too dazed to grasp the situation. Meanwhile

Golden-lilies' volubility was unchecked.

"Ask him, your Excellency, and he will tell you he is the man; that the ferryman told a wicked lie; and that far from having been killed, he has not suffered the slightest inconvenience from his fall."

"But your husband has confessed that he murdered him," said the magistrate.

"The ferryman told him he had, and he believed him; but it was not true," urged Golden-lilies; "and just when I thought that the darkest hour of my life had come, when all hope of seeing my husband again alive seemed vanishing, who should knock at our door but the pedlar himself. Without waiting to hear his explanation, I have brought him with me; and now do let my husband go."

"Not so fast," said the magistrate. "I must first satisfy myself that this is Ting,, and then I must inquire who that dead man yonder is, or rather was. Call Tan."

At this invocation Tan took up his former position on his knees; but in the interval since his last appearance he had lost confidence, and the turn events had taken did not, he saw, clearly reflect so brightly on his prospects as they did on Ts'eng's. He felt that he was compromised, though he could not understand all, and was not quite sure how the magistrate would, on review, regard his conduct.

"Do you recognise that man?" asked the magistrate, pointing at Ting.

"Yes, your Excellency; he is Ting the pedlar, or his ghost."

"But in your evidence you charged your master with murdering Ting, and you swore that you buried him; and in support of your

assertions you produce a body which is not Ting's, since Ting is here. How do you explain this?"

"All I can say, your Excellency, is, that my master ordered me to bury Ting; and Lai, the ferryman, told me that the man I buried was Ting."

"Arrest Lai and bring him before me at once," said the magistrate to a police-runner; "and meanwhile I will hear the pedlar's evidence. Bring him forward. Who are you?"

"My contemptible surname, your Excellency, is Ting, and my personal name is 'Heavenly Brightness.'"

"Tell me what you know of this matter."

"After leaving the house of his honour Ts'eng," said Ting, "I got into Lai's ferry-boat to cross the lake. On the way over I told him the story of the fracas at his honour's door, and showed him the silk which had been given me. He took a fancy to the pattern on it, and bought it from me, as well as the basket in which I carried it. Nothing else happened until just as we got to the other shore, when we saw the corpse of a man floating in the water. As I walked away from the shore I turned round and saw Lai rowing towards the body. I reached home the same evening and remained there until to-day, when I called at his honour's house. On showing myself at the door I was, to my surprise, hurried off here, and now I kneel in your Excellency's presence."

At this juncture Lai entered. The last few weeks' dissipation had not improved his appearance, and his ill-concealed terror at his present predicament added a ghastly paleness to his bleared and sallow complexion.

"How is this," said the magistrate, "that you have charged an

innocent man with murder, and have palmed off on him the body of some one else as that of the man you said he had murdered?"

Seeing that circumstances were against him Lai was silent.

"Now listen," said the magistrate; "you, Lai, are the principal culprit in this affair. You brought an unjust accusation against an innocent man, and by means of it extorted money from him. For these crimes I sentence you to receive a hundred blows with the large bamboo, and to be transported into Mongolia for five years. Because you, Tan, having connived at the concealment of what you believed to be a murder, charged your master with the murder out of a spirit of revenge, I sentence you to receive fifty blows on the mouth, and fifty blows with the large bamboo. And as to you, Ts'eng, though your conduct has been bad in attempting to conceal what you believed to be your crime, and in bribing others to

silence, yet, in consideration of your imprisonment and of what you have gone through, I acquit you."

Never were more life-giving words uttered than those addressed by the magistrate to Ts'eng. Their effect was visible upon him physically; he seemed to grow in bulk under their gracious influence, and his face reverted from the pallor of death to the colour of life.

"May your Excellency live for ever," said he, as he *kotowed* before his judge, who, however, had left the judgment-seat before he had completed his nine prostrations. As the magistrate turned away from the hall, he met Mr Tso, who had come to call upon him.

"So our friend Ts'eng has got off, I see," said his visitor.

"Yes," said the magistrate, "but I have quite come round to your estimate of his character. He is a poor creature. I sent a much finer fellow to the execution-ground yesterday."

SIR ALEXANDER GRANT.

THE year 1884 will probably be regarded by the writer who in after-years takes up the 'Story of the University of Edinburgh' as the most memorable and impressive year in the annals of that institution. It is hardly too much to say that it was in that year that the University first became fully conscious that it had a history, and that teachers and students fully realised that the work on which they were engaged was connected by continuous development with that which had been carried on in or near the same place for three centuries. The numbers attending the University, which had been rapidly increasing for several previous years, in that year reached a maximum never previously attained. The year was further memorable for the completion of the new buildings, by which Edinburgh has been provided with a school of science and medicine superior to any in Britain, and second to very few in Europe. And while these results would be dwelt on, as marking the highest point in material prosperity which the University had attained, the great tercentenary celebration of last April might well stimulate the imagination of the writer, and claim to be described with the rich colouring of historic art. But he would probably feel that the true significance of that event is best expressed in the words spoken by the Principal in his address to the students at the opening of the present session.

"When we think," he said, "of the unanimous response, of the most cordial and the most respectful character, which our invitations received from all the great foreign schools; when we think of that notable assemblage of delegates—the greatest inter-academic and international gathering that has ever been seen—marshalled in their varied costumes within the Parliament House; when we think of those hundred addresses jointly testifying that the University of Edinburgh is held in high esteem, that the names of its great men are widely known, and that it is considered to have had a glorious past; and when we recall the eloquent words of so many gifted orators, who from various points of view brought their contributions of sympathy and of praise to decorate the occasion,—we cannot but feel that no university in the history of civilisation has ever been so highly honoured as ours."¹

And if the writer has the sympathetic discernment through which the characters of men can be read in their writings, he will see that the feeling of pride which prompted these words is entirely impersonal; and if he turns to the actual records of the celebration, he will find that the man to whose imagination, practical sagacity, and affection for his University the conception and realisation of the idea are almost entirely due, did not regard it as an occasion for personal display, but, while performing admirably every duty imposed by his position, kept himself in the background, and left it to the distinguished guests of the University to speak to the assembled graduates and students.

¹ Address to the Students of the University of Edinburgh, by Sir Alexander Grant, Bart., Principal of the University of Edinburgh, &c., &c., delivered on 28th October 1884. W. Blackwood & Sons.

The writer would then probably speak of the address delivered by the Principal to the students on the 28th of October, which, even if no other record of him survived, would prove that Edinburgh University was, from the year 1868 till the year 1884, presided over by a man of remarkable qualities of heart, mind, and imagination; full of enthusiasm and reverence, regulated and controlled by common sense and practical sagacity; dignified and simple in his bearing; holding a high ideal of what the University ought to be, and at the same time loving it with loyal affection as it actually was; generous and kindly in his relations to his colleagues, most solicitous for the welfare of the students over whom he presided, and courteous and considerate in all his intercourse with them; one, too, who could speak and write with grace and power on great occasions, as he did with grace and playful humour, in which there was no sting, on the lighter occasions of social meetings. Through all this memorable year, in the relations of the University to the outside world, to the men of learning and science who came from foreign universities, to students and graduates, and in the conduct of all its internal affairs, he stood forth the living representative of the spirit of the University. Then, when he had just witnessed and inaugurated the commencement of what he confidently looked forward to as a new and greater era of academic progress, came the stroke, tragically sudden and unexpected, which deprived the University of his great administrative ability, his colleagues of one whom in all their relations with him they felt to be a personal friend; the students of the University of one who had a heart still young enough to sympathise with their

amusements, while he had the wisdom, based on wide culture and large intercourse with the world, to know and hold before them the ideal of character at which they should aim; and which took from the social life of Edinburgh one who met all classes with simple cordiality and urbanity, and who left upon all who came in any way into close contact with him, an impression of intellectual power, of a large heart, and of great public spirit,—of one exceptionally free from personal vanity, ambition, or self-seeking of any kind, and who found his happiness in doing his duty, in the minutest details as well as in the largest schemes for its improvement, to the institution to which he came sixteen years before as a stranger.

While it was with the University of Edinburgh that the last and longest part of his career was identified, and while it is there that the sense of his loss is freshest, yet his name is still remembered for excellent work done in two other widely different spheres. For ten years after taking his degree at Oxford he worked as a private tutor, and occasionally as a public examiner there; and the appreciation of what he was and what he did then, was shown by the recent bestowal of the honorary degree of D.C.L. upon him by the University, and by his election as an Honorary Fellow of Oriel, the college of which he was a distinguished actual Fellow between the years 1840 and 1859. But more than by any outward signs of honour, his qualities of mind and heart are attested by the lasting affection felt for him by contemporaries who formerly stood to him in the relation of tutor or pupil, or simply of fellow-student. Among those

with whom he was most intimate at Balliol and Oriel, several have since obtained distinction in the world ; some were cut off at a still earlier age, leaving on the memory of their friends a deep impression of what they had been, and of what they were still capable of becoming. Those who still survive of the men of that time, who were intimate with one another, feel that one more of the best among their friends — to meet whom in later life, on his occasional visits to Oxford and London, was one of their greatest pleasures— has been taken from them. The second part of his active career was passed in a larger and less familiar sphere. From 1859 to 1868 he filled various important educational offices in India, ultimately becoming Director of Public Instruction and Member of the Legislative Council of Bombay. Nothing can show the variety and versatility of his gifts more than his success in a career so different from that of the student of literature and philosophy, in which he first gained distinction. Not only were his services to the cause of education in India acknowledged in important official documents, but his active kindness is still remembered by some of those who were his students at Elphinstone College. His duties in Edinburgh involved a complete change from his previous work both in Oxford and in India. They gave no scope to his admirable powers of teaching, by which he won distinction at Oxford. He was called upon to administer a long-established educational system, not to initiate and organise a new one, as he had done in India. He had, in the earlier years at least of his Principalship, rather to attend to a number of minute and multifarious details, than to at-

tempt anything on a great scale. But from the first he felt himself identified with the work here, as he had done in India : he became attached to the University with that fondness for all his surroundings which at all times came naturally to him ; and he most earnestly desired to see it hold a higher place in literature, science, and professional teaching, than it had at any former time. With the expansion of the University within the last ten years, and the call for new buildings to meet that expansion, he recognised a new mode of serving it, for which his tact and knowledge of men, his courtesy and conciliatory temper, admirably fitted him ; and while it is to the munificence of many benefactors that the University owes its recent enlargement, it will be acknowledged by those associated with him in the task of laying the claims of the University before the public, that the personal influence of the Principal was a powerful agent in attracting that munificence. Long before it had occurred to any one else, his imagination recognised the completion of the third century in the life of the University as a great opportunity ; and it was by that idea that he was stimulated to devote years to the composition of his history, which, whether it may or may not satisfy critics as a work of art, is perhaps the greatest literary monument ever raised to the honour of any university.

It might at first sight appear that this was, in some respects, a broken career ; and that more effectual work might have been done and greater distinction acquired had his life been passed in one sphere of duty. He would certainly have taken a still higher rank than he now holds among the

interpreters of Aristotle and the teachers of moral philosophy had he continued his career at Oxford. Or had he come straight from Oxford to a professorship in a Scottish university, and in that position become familiar with the peculiarities of Scottish education before he was called to the Principalship, he would have gained an experience which would have qualified him better, perhaps, than any other man, to initiate and direct the reform of our schools and universities. But the greater distinction as a writer, and the special experience which would have made the problems of our Scottish educational system more immediately intelligible to him, would have been gained with the loss of that larger experience and discipline which developed all his power both of thought and action. By one who knew him both in the earlier and the latest stage in his career, the cultivated Oxford man, who from the years 1845 to 1859 made himself a name in scholarship and philosophy, and attached to himself so many friends, can be recognised as the same in his essential qualities and gifts with the man who, in after life, obtained so great a hold over all those with whom he acted,—gaining their confidence by his loyalty to the cause in which they were jointly interested, attaching them to himself by his genial and cordial intercourse with them, and impressing their imagination with a sense of reserved power,—as of one capable of fulfilling larger duties in the sphere of government and administration, had they come in his way, and of distinction, as of one who could have taken his place easily and naturally among the great in the sphere both of thought and action.

A short sketch of his career may not be unwelcome at a time

when the thought of his loss is still vivid among old college friends and more recent colleagues, and his familiar figure is missed by many, with a sense of pain, in the streets of Edinburgh. By birth he belonged, on the father's side, to an old Scottish family, the Grants of Dalvey on Speyside. The family estate had been sold by his grandfather, and the fortune invested in West India property; and from that time the connection of the family with Scotland had ceased. His uncle, Sir Alexander Grant, the sixth Baronet, was well known in political circles and in London society, had been Chairman of Committee in the House of Commons, and was a prominent member of the Carlton Club. His mother was of mixed French and Scottish extraction, and was the daughter of a planter in the Danish West Indian island of Santa Cruz. It is not perhaps fanciful to trace some of the characteristics which marked him through life to his family history. When he first came up from school to Oxford, men remarked under the unaffected geniality of his manners something of an old-fashioned courtesy and distinction, which has been noticed as characteristic of old Scottish families, and has been supposed to be a survival of the historical connection between France and Scotland. His remarkable freedom from prejudice and partisanship, and the facility with which he adapted himself to new circumstances and new people, come more naturally to a Scotchman by descent, born and educated out of Scotland, than either to a home-bred Scot or a home-bred Englishman. Though no man could have had less of the assumption which the consciousness of good birth sometimes imparts to men of in

ferior intellectual calibre, yet he had a much livelier sympathy with the inherited capacity of a governing class than with the qualities which make men successful party politicians ; and while in the best sense of the word liberal in his views, he was much more interested in imperial questions, and in those affecting human culture, than in the political struggles of these later days. He was born at New York in 1826, and brought almost immediately afterwards to England. He passed two or three years of his childhood in the West Indies ; and his earliest recollections of the awakening of mental interests and of a taste for reading were connected with that time. After returning to England and going to one or two preparatory schools, he went to Harrow in 1839, which he entered in the lowest form, and left at the head of the school in 1844. He must have worked hard there, as he gained all the great prizes of the school for verse and prose composition ; but according to his own account, all his natural tastes were for outdoor sports and games ; and it was only by an effort of will, and (it may be added) under the influence of that ambition which, as he tells the students in his last address, is "in youth almost identical with virtue," that he kept steadily to his work. He was probably kept up to it also by the influence of his most intimate school friend, Percy Smythe, the last Lord Strangford, whose whole life, from his boyhood till his early death, was one of unceasing mental activity. Though Grant left Harrow a well-developed scholar on all sides, his chief distinction was gained in Latin verse,—an accomplishment which in many cases has had a special attraction for those who in later life have gained

honour in action, as it has had for others who have become classical writers of English prose and verse. He gained distinction also in games, and especially in the great game in which the chief renown of Harrow has been won ; and for two successive seasons he played at Lords in the matches against Eton and Winchester. In November of 1844 he was elected to one of the two open Balliol scholarships, the other being gained by one whose great knowledge and intellectual brilliancy are still fresh in the memory of Oxford men, H. J. Smith, the late Savilian Professor of Geometry. The third in the competition was the present Judge Advocate-General. He came into residence in the spring of 1845, and at once became popular with all sets in college—reading men and idle men, fast men and steady men, men of High Church and men of Broad Church tendencies, the last of which were just at that time beginning to assert themselves. But while no man enjoyed the amusements and social life of the place with more zest, his main interest even as an undergraduate was intellectual self-improvement. He was especially fond of the literature which treats speculative questions of human interest with a union of thought and imagination : and among his favourite prose authors were Coleridge, Carlyle, Emerson, and later, in his Oxford time, Goethe ; and among English poets, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Tennyson. He read his Latin and Greek authors, to enjoy them and to imbibe their spirit, not to gain marks in examinations ; and the result of this mode of reading was, that he was placed only in the second class in the final examination for his degree—a class in which, about that period, other men appear whose

names are better known to the world than those of the majority of double firsts—among them Clough, Mr M. Arnold, Mr Froude, and Mr Freeman. He was elected in the following year (1849), above twelve first-class men, to the open Oriel Fellowship, in the awarding of which the Examiners professed to regard originality and power of mind, breadth of culture and refined scholarship, rather than special knowledge. During that year, or the year of revolution immediately preceding it, the final blow had fallen on the fortunes of his family, by the unexpected emancipation of all the slaves in the island of Santa Cruz, without any compensation being awarded to the owners. He had looked forward to going to the English bar, and it had been an object of his ambition to be able, by his success in that career, to repair the fortunes of his house. But he accepted cheerfully the necessity now imposed upon him of supporting himself, and he at once took up the rôle of a private tutor, by which, in conjunction with his fellowship, a sufficient income might be made. His success was immediate, and the result of it may be said to be lasting, as he introduced a revolution into the traditional teaching and studying of what had been for forty years the great Oxford text-book, the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle. This had been taught to their pupils by private tutors, many of them very young men, who either repeated with variations the tradition they had received from the tutors of a former generation, or if they shared in the vague speculative enthusiasm on ethical and religious subjects which was then in the air, struck out a new tradition for themselves. There was much in this teaching that was interesting and stimulating; and it served to bring out, what is sometimes not brought out in the more exact and critical study of the great classical writers, the vital human meaning which they have for all times. But it hardly deserved to be called moral philosophy, nor would it have been regarded in a German university as an interpretation of Aristotle. No one recognised more clearly, or sympathised more with, the human and ethical interest of the book which he had to expound, than Sir Alexander; but he had learned from the lectures on the *History of Philosophy*, which shortly before that time had been given in Balliol by the present Master of that college, that the book had, in the first place, to be interpreted as an ancient document, in close connection with the whole speculative system of Aristotle, with the previous teaching of Plato, and with the whole moral and political ideas, with the art, life, and sentiment, of the Greek race. This conception of his task imposed upon him a more elaborate study of the works of Aristotle than perhaps any other Oxford man, since Sir W. Hamilton, had given to them; and the result of that study was not only that the treatise was henceforth taught critically and philosophically, but that the vital human interest pervading it was recognised as much deeper than when the work was interpreted vaguely and arbitrarily. The fruit of all his study and teaching appeared in the publication, about the year 1858, of his Edition of the '*Ethics*,' which at once became a standard text-book, and of which a fourth edition was published only about two months ago. The permanent value of the work may be estimated from the fact that, though it has often been criticised, no attempt has yet been

made to supersede it. It is not unlikely that an edition of the 'Ethics' may be produced more critically exact than that which now occupies the field; but unless it is written at the same time with as much speculative power, as penetrating insight, as large a feeling and comprehension of human nature, it will not easily displace its older rival.

During a Christmas vacation, while he was still a resident at Oxford, he had come to visit a college friend then living at St Andrews, and became intimate with Professor Ferrier, to whose second daughter he became soon after engaged. He and his future father-in-law were strongly drawn to one another by their common interest in philosophy and literature, and by the humour, social gifts, and manliness of character which characterised each of them. Under this influence he came to study the metaphysical side of philosophy more than he had done; and one can remember their half-serious, half-humorous discussions about their readings of Hegel, which they carried on simultaneously. But to Sir A. Grant the human and ethical side of philosophy had always greater attraction than the abstract; and though, as his latest Address shows, he retained to the last his belief in the value of metaphysics, this was due rather to his feeling that in the higher philosophy was to be found the answer to materialism, than to the interest in the "quest for the absolute" in which Ferrier delighted.

About this time he became a candidate for the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in the University of Oxford, but the claims of an older and better known candidate were preferred to his. As there appeared to be no opening for him in England which would enable him to marry, he accepted the offer

of Sir Charles Trevelyan—who saw in him the very qualifications needed for the carrying out of his plans for the spread of Vernacular education—to accompany him to Madras; and with cheerful courage he began his career in India, in what, for a man of his powers and attainments, might seem the comparatively humble post of Inspector of Native Schools in the Presidency. His friends regretted not only the loss to him of a position which he desired, and for themselves the loss of his society, but the loss to Oxford of a man who, by his teaching and writing, was sure to add distinction even to that University. The result proved not only that what was a loss to Oxford was a gain to India, but that it was also a gain to himself,—on the ground which he himself lays down in his last Address to the students, that "the chief good for a man in this world is the consciousness of having developed and employed the faculties allotted to him, and of having done his duty." The work in India to which he devotes himself, heart and soul, from the very first, called forth in him latent powers, of which he himself had probably been unconscious, and for the first time afforded a field in which his greatest and most original gifts might exercise themselves. His services and capacity were immediately recognised, and from the Presidency of Madras he was soon called to, that of Bombay, where in rapid succession he filled the posts of Professor of History and Political Economy in the Elphinstone College, of Principal of the College, of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay, of Director of Public Instruction, and of Member of the Legislative Council in the Presi-

dency. The impression which he left of himself in the more important of these positions may be seen in a minute of the Bombay University on his leaving India in 1868, and in a letter of the same date from the Secretary of State for India to the Governor of the Presidency, commenting on his last report on public instruction in Bombay. The first speaks in language which might almost have been adopted *verbatim* sixteen years afterwards by the Senatus of the University of Edinburgh, of "his ability in administration;" of "his important suggestions and effective aid in the revision of the bye-laws of the University, especially as bearing on the extension, arrangement, and balance of the studies which it prescribes"; of "his temper and tact when discharging the duties of the chair," and "of his extensive influence with the public in the matter of endowments and beneficiaries." The latter recognised "the clearness and moderation of his report," "the solidity and reality of his administration"; it speaks of "the nerve required to strike off nearly 1700 from the number (on paper) of English-learning pupils, and of the just confidence entertained that this was done in the interests of real English education," and concludes with expressing "concurrency in the just remarks recorded by your Excellency in Council, relative to the very valuable services rendered by Sir A. Grant to the cause of Education in India." One phrase in the Duke of Argyll's despatch, "solidity and reality," admirably characterises one great quality in all Sir Alexander's work. He was a great master of detail,

and capable of great industry in acquiring that mastery. But he had over and above that practical gift the larger imagination and enthusiasm which imparts a soul to the minutest details, by seeing how they minister to some noble and beneficent end. Like all the best and ablest men who have borne a prominent part in Indian affairs, he had a most loyal confidence in the justice and beneficence of the English rule in India. He believed it to be conducive both to the greatness of England and to the wellbeing of the Indian people. He had also a sanguine belief in the effect of high intellectual culture in making men reasonable. He hoped that the result of imparting Western ideas through Western culture to the ablest and most influential among our Eastern subjects, would be the strengthening of the bond which unites India to England. But if it should not be so, he had a magnanimous sympathy with the magnanimous words of a former Governor of Bombay, which he quotes in a lecture¹ delivered by him in 1862 :—

"General Briggs one day observing in the corner of Mr Elphinstone's tent a pile of printed Marathi books, asked him what they were meant for. 'To educate the natives,' said Mr Elphinstone, 'but it is our high-road back to Europe.' General Briggs replied, 'Then I wonder that you, as Governor of Bombay, have set it on foot.' Mr Elphinstone answered coolly, 'We are bound under all circumstances to do our duty by them.'"

It was this union of strong realism with elevated idealism which was the secret of Sir Alexander's success in practical affairs. Is it not the secret of greatness in every sphere of action?

¹ How the Ancient Romans Governed their Provinces: A lecture delivered before the Bombay Mechanics' Institution, on the 17th of January 1862, by Sir A. Grant, Bart., &c. Bombay, 1862.

On leaving Bombay in 1868, he spoke of the years passed there as the happiest in his life. He made many new friends, among them Sir Bartle Frere,—the bond that united them being one of mutual regard and of mutual confidence. He enjoyed the society of all classes with whom he was brought into contact,—soldiers and civilians, merchants and missionaries, Europeans and natives. It might seem at first sight to require explanation why he left a position so congenial to him in every way, and a post of great influence and distinction, for a new sphere, which could scarcely afford equal scope for his practical originality, and was at the same time ready to sacrifice a handsome income for one, at that time almost ludicrously inadequate to the position which he was called upon to fill. The explanation is, that while interest in his work always constituted a great part of his happiness, the strength of his affection for his family constituted a still more essential part of it. Part of the price paid for our pride of empire is the pain of family separation, which life in India imposes on many brave men and tender-hearted women. The loss of two of their children in India had been a great sorrow to him and to Lady Grant, and the necessity of a long separation from the others had been thus painfully impressed upon them. Thus, when the electors to the Principalship of Edinburgh University, on the death of Sir David Brewster, invited him to accept the vacant office, he willingly consented. The position of Principal in a Scottish University is very different from that of the Head of a college at Oxford or Cambridge. It is sometimes spoken of invidiously as a merely ornamental position, or, in a more complimentary style, as a position of learned or scientific leisure. It is a doubtful question whether the office of Principal ought to be combined with any teaching duties. Probably the disadvantages of such a combination would, in most cases, predominate over its advantages. But in his case it would have been a gain to himself and a very great gain to the University. For himself, it would have supplied a constant and regular stimulus to his speculative originality and literary accomplishment; it would have added a new and original element to the teaching power of the University. But the especial advantage of this union would have been, that it would have enabled him to realise, by practical experience and actual contact, what it is so difficult for one who has neither studied nor taught in a Scottish University to realise,—the strength and the weakness of its teaching, and the peculiar characteristics of Scottish students. It was known to be in accordance with his own wish, that the teaching of a subject which then seemed to be unappropriated should be assigned to him; but the legitimate objection to any infringement of the rights of one of the existing chairs, though they had for some time been unexercised, and the almost morbid jealousy which exists in Scotland against any plurality of offices, prevented that arrangement. At a much later time, when the temporary illness of the late Professor of Greek made it necessary that his classes should be taught by a substitute, he willingly undertook the duty. He enjoyed the work extremely; he thoroughly liked the students, and they thoroughly liked him and heartily appreciated his teaching. The growing interest which he felt in them, and his admiration

for their best qualities, was undoubtedly increased by this actual contact with them. And although he continued to the last earnest in his desire to see the teaching of the Arts Faculty reformed, his views as to what the actual reforms ought to be, became considerably modified. Though he recognised, almost as soon as he entered on his office, the fact that it was one rather of outward dignity than of actual power, he soon learned it could be made one of great practical usefulness and influence. If he could not effect immediate reforms by the exercise of authority, he could prepare the way for more complete and matured reforms by the exercise of persuasion. He made himself thoroughly master of the multifarious business of the University. He presided over and took the most active part in all the committees into which the Senatus is divided for the conduct of business. As the one permanent member in the University Court, and as the member most conversant with the affairs of the University, he had naturally the greatest weight in its counsels. No man could have presided over the meetings of the Senatus with more tact, temper, and patience. He had an immediate perception of what was important and unimportant, relevant and irrelevant, in its discussions. His quiet sense of humour was of use to him in this position. It will happen occasionally in a body of men, the majority of whom give their minds chiefly to their special subject, that when they meet for the consideration of their common business, individuals among them will talk at random, and that members of the Arts Faculty will imagine that they know better what is good for the Medical Faculty than they do themselves, and *vice versa*. On

these rare occasions the Principal had apparently the power of abstracting himself from what was going on, and of appearing to wake up when there was a temporary lull in the debate, quietly remarking, "Had we not better go on to the next business." One of his greatest services to the University was the changed relation between it and the city of Edinburgh, which is to be ascribed almost entirely to his influence. There had been an old standing feud between the academic body and the civic powers in the community. There is a natural tendency for such bodies to misunderstand one another, and for each of them to exaggerate the misunderstanding. Even the virtues of the Scotch are more allied to the combative element in their composition than to the spirit of conciliation. Each party thought it a point of honour, as well as a natural gratification, to perpetuate the misunderstanding. There was nothing weak or unduly yielding in the Principal's temper. He could be combative, if necessary, and would do what was for the interest of the University, without fear or regard to favour. But his whole nature was eminently peace-loving, conciliatory, and reasonable. As a man of academic culture, and a man of the world, he could sympathise with both sides. But he saw that it was not only the interest but the duty of the University that this misunderstanding should cease. He made himself the medium of uniting the academic body with all classes of the community; and the completion of the new buildings is a standing monument of his success. Another and still more important change of spirit in the University, which, if it is not fully accomplished, is, it may be hoped, more near accomplishment than it has been be

fore, is due to him. In Scottish universities and Scottish schools, the principle of individualism has had a too exclusive predominance. Each teacher and each professor was supposed to fight for his own hand, and to be the jealous guardian of the interests and the claims of his own subject. The aim of the Principal was that, while individual interests and susceptibilities should have their due place, all should act harmoniously together for the good of the whole. Whether this feeling will be permanent and practically operative remains to be seen. In the changes which await the universities, especially in the adjustment of the due balance between rival studies, his moderating influence will be sorely missed. It is impossible that any one else can, before these changes come, gain so absolutely the confidence of all his colleagues as he did, by the faithful discharge of all his duties during sixteen years. That confidence was not given merely to his administrative ability and power of mind, but was the result of a conviction, which grew stronger and stronger every year, that in the performance of all his public duties, he was not actuated by any thought of self, by any desire of popularity, or even by that "last infirmity" of strong

natures—the love of power—but solely by the love of his University, and his care for its welfare.

The limits of this article do not admit of any criticism of his various writings beyond what has been already indicated. One word, however, may be allowed on his latest writing, which was not given to the world till after his death. In his last Address future generations of students and professors will see, better even than in his more elaborate works, the true image of the man. They will there find the ripe fruit of all his early culture, and of all his mature experience. He was one of those to whom the fine line of Horace, full as so much of his later writing is of wise reflection, and true human feeling,

"*Lenior et melior fis accedente senecta,*"

was peculiarly applicable. As he grew in power, he grew also in gentleness. Those, too, who knew him in the freshness of his youthful vigour, and the charm of his youthful enthusiasm, will feel as they read that Address, that at no time of his career was his heart greater and more true, his intellect more powerful, his whole view of life more pure and elevated, than at the time when he was so suddenly and unexpectedly taken away.

THE END OF THE STRUGGLE.

THE second autumn session of Mr Gladstone's Government will fill a memorable place in the Parliamentary history of the country—memorable not only for the work accomplished, but for the mode and means of its accomplishment.

Parliament was summoned in order that the Lords, duly impressed by the agitation of the recess, might be intimidated into passing the Franchise Bill by itself and without delay, while the House of Commons would find sufficient occupation in voting the necessary supplies for the Egyptian and South African expeditions.

The only distinct statement on the subject of Reform in the Queen's Speech was, "The Bill for the extension of the Parliamentary Franchise will at once be introduced;" and the speech of Mr Gladstone on the Address was generally and justly understood as a direct warning to the House of Lords that they should pass that measure irrespective of any bill for the necessary redistribution of seats, or incur the indignation of an outraged people.

Such was the Ministerial programme. What really happened? The House of Commons, indeed, voted the supplies for the Nile and the Bechuanaland expeditions, but, before it adjourned, had to listen to a long and dreary catalogue of administrative shortcomings and deficiencies delivered on the part of the Admiralty by its new Secretary, Sir Thomas Brassey, and to face the unpleasant fact that as the result of four years' administration of affairs by a Government pledged to Peace, Re-

trenchment, and Reform, an extra and abnormal expenditure of at least £5,000,000 would be added to the naval estimates of the next few years. The jubilant demonstrators of Mid-Lothian and Hyde Park as little foresaw such a financial termination of the autumn session as they did the arrangement, or compromise, or capitulation, as they variously describe it, by which, and by which alone, the Franchise Bill became law. Startling and important, however, as is the addition to our naval expenditure thus asked for, the principle which underlies it is still more so, and must entail far greater sacrifices than those named by Lord Northbrook and Sir Thomas Brassey. To suppose that our naval strength can be rendered equal to that of France and Italy combined, our foreign coaling-stations and our home commercial ports adequately protected, at a cost of only £5,000,000 above our ordinary annual navy estimates, is to indulge in the idlest of dreams; and to pretend to achieve these great and vital objects, and then allow them to remain for years unaccomplished, is to invite the disaster which would then have been made merely the pretext for unavailing expenditure.

The country, therefore, will, in our opinion, have to date from the recent autumn session the addition of from £1,500,000 to £2,000,000 a-year to its naval expenditure, while the extraordinary and persistent blundering of the Government in Egypt will prevent for years to come any diminution of our army estimates—if, indeed,

their policy there and elsewhere does not necessitate an absolute increase. This growth of expenditure, coincident, as we believe it will be, with a diminution of revenue, will bring Government and Parliament in a year or two face to face with the whole question of our fiscal system—the most delicate and most dangerous of all problems to be submitted to the arbitrament, in the last resort, of the newly enfranchised millions. The *doctrinaires* of the Cobden Club will probably before long bitterly regret that they obstinately adhered to their theories, when they might have modified them to meet the obvious change of circumstances and popular feeling, while retaining the cardinal principle of a tariff for revenue and not for protection. We earnestly hope that the Conservative party will be willing and able to place before the new constituencies a reasonable scheme of fiscal readjustment, by which the glaring injustice and absurdity of less than £20,000,000, out of a total of £135,000,000 raised by taxation for imperial and local purposes, being received at the Custom House, will be remedied.

It is, we are convinced, a delusion to suppose that the doctrines of political economy or the system of free imports are popular with democracies, whether in the Old or the New World ; and that after 1886 the House of Commons will represent the democracy of the United Kingdom, with whatever safeguards and counterpoises, we hold to be an indisputable political fact. In that year our Constitution will exhibit the untried and unique combination of a hereditary Monarchy, a hereditary Second Chamber, and a democratic House of Commons ; and yet we are bold to say that the dangerous experi-

ment will succeed, and that, owing to the gradual process by which the last and greatest change in the representative system has been arrived at, and the happy blending of courage and caution which presided over the final rearrangement of the electoral areas, King, Lords, and Commons will still continue to play their proper and distinctive parts in the government of this historic empire.

In support of this cheerful view of the future, we would direct attention to some of the circumstances attending the recent treaty of peace, and to the leading provisions of the new representative Constitution.

In our last number we cited a remarkable article in the 'Daily News' to show that Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote, in accepting the olive-branch tendered to them publicly on the 17th, and privately with fuller and more satisfactory explanations on the morning of the 18th of November, did not derogate from the position originally assumed and consistently maintained throughout the struggle by the House of Lords ; but as attempts have since been made, by politicians differing so widely as Mr Chaplin and Mr John Morley, to represent the agreement as a surrender on the part of the Conservative leaders, we here reproduce the deliberate conclusion of that able organ of metropolitan Liberalism, which expresses the exact and literal facts of the case :—

"The Government have receded from the demand that the undertaking of the Peers to pass the Franchise Bill shall be a condition precedent of the submission to the Conservative leaders of the Redistribution Bill. The latter must be 'seen and approved' by Lord Salisbury before he will enter into any arrangement ; so

that the freedom of action of the Peers is completely reserved."¹

Yes—the freedom of action of the Peers is completely reserved; but can the same be said of the freedom of action of the Commons with respect to the Redistribution of Seats Bill? By the most extraordinary *volte-face* known to our parliamentary history, the struggle, commenced a few months ago by an arrogant Minister and an angry majority in the Lower House, for the purpose of ousting the Upper House from all jurisdiction in the great question of Parliamentary Reform, has ended by respecting the rights of the latter, and submitting those of the former to the previous control and decision of the leader of the Tory majority in the victorious House of Lords!

The futility of Mr Gladstone's alleged precedent in the case of the Irish Church was apparent to everybody. There the measure had been thoroughly discussed and voted upon by both Houses of Parliament, and when an apparently irreconcilable difference of opinion on one or two points of detail not affecting the principle of the measure was found to exist, the leaders of both parties in the House of Lords met and agreed to a compromise; but here, before the bill is even introduced, it is submitted to the previous judgment and criticism of the leaders of the Opposition in both Houses of Parliament, and is only allowed to see the light after its reputed parents have divested themselves of all power to change or modify any of its provisions which either found favour with, or were inserted by, Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote.

Our parliamentary records may be ransacked in vain for any such capitulation on the part of the Executive Government; and while we will not withhold our tribute of approbation for the self-control and self-abnegation thus displayed at the last moment by Mr Gladstone, we must resolutely assert that the honours and substantial fruit of the campaign rest with the Opposition and the House of Lords. The history of the words "seen and approved," as quoted by the 'Daily News,' admirably illustrates and explains the actual situation. In the ancient and picturesque city of Coblenz is still to be seen the Castor-Brunnen, with its original inscription, "An 1812. Mémorable par la campagne contre les Russes. Sous la Préfecturat de Jules Doagan;" and the Russian General St Priest's famous addition to it, "Vu et approuvé par nous Commandant Russe de la ville de Coblenz. Le 1^{er} Jan. 1814."

So on the back of the Redistribution Bill appear, indeed, the names of Mr Gladstone, Lord Hartington, and other Ministers; but underneath them are legible to the mental eyes of every member of the House of Commons the words—"Seen and approved by us, Salisbury and Stafford Northcote." A greater triumph, we venture to say, was never won by the calm courage and wise perseverance of an Opposition.

But it may be said—it has been said—Of what value is the victory when it ends in a political revolution? To this question the answer, as it seems to us, is twofold. First, the revolution was virtually accomplished when the House of Lords last July accepted Lord

¹ Daily News, November 19, 1884.

Cadogan's resolution. Thenceforward a uniform household franchise for the three kingdoms became inevitable, and with it that close approach to equal electoral divisions which the prescience of Lord Beaconsfield had detected and announced as its necessary consequence in 1874. "No one," said Lord Beaconsfield, "can deny that the consequence of adopting the recommendations of the honourable member for the Border boroughs, and enfranchising these classes, is, that practically we must look also to the redistribution of seats at the same time. No one can deny that in so doing we must move in the direction of electoral districts. Why, all our late legislation for the last forty years with respect to parliamentary reform and the distribution of seats has been leading to electoral districts; and although I, for one, should think it a great misfortune if we entirely destroyed all local influences and distinctions—although I believe, if we did, we should very much weaken the spirit and character of the country—and although I hold that we ought to cling as much as possible to maintaining those local influences and distinctions,—still it is impossible not to see that if you do reconsider and redistribute political power in deference to these views, you must to a great extent be approaching electoral districts."¹ We can only wonder at the judicial blindness of Conservatives like Mr Chaplin, who proclaim themselves favourable to household suffrage in the counties, and then shrink back in horror and alarm at the measures rendered necessary to carry their principles into practical effect.

A close approach, therefore, in

Lord Beaconsfield's words, to electoral districts being inevitable, the only question remaining to be considered is, Does the Redistribution Bill, as settled by the leaders of both parties, make the necessary change in the depositaries of electoral power with adequate impartiality and fairness? To answer that question properly, the bill must be considered in conjunction with and in the light of the Franchise Bill, and the instructions to the Boundary Commissioners; and so regarding it, we answer the question in the affirmative. Under the various franchises continued or created by the Franchise Act, nearly every man of legal age who has any settled dwelling, whether he pays rent for it or not, may have the franchise; and the object of the Redistribution Bill, and the work of the Boundary Commissioners, is to recast, within certain definite lines, the urban and rural constituencies, so as to give—due regard being had to population and geographical considerations—a fair representation to the various pursuits and industries of the nation.

Short of equal electoral districts, which do not appear to have found favour with any responsible statesman, two modes, and two only, suggest themselves for effecting the desired object: one, the rough-and-ready way of separating urban from rural populations—by grouping towns and boroughs; the other, the more elastic, and, as it seems to us, more complete and satisfactory method of dividing both urban and rural constituencies (with certain specified exceptions) into single-membered divisions.

To the system of grouping, under existing circumstances, an objec-

¹ Speeches of the Earl of Beaconsfield, vol. i. p. 361.

tion on principle arises *in limine*. So long as there was a substantial difference between the borough and the county franchises, there could be no valid objection on principle to abstracting towns from the county and linking them together in a group of boroughs; but now, when the franchise is uniform, on what principle can the intervening district, containing in many instances large villages with a manufacturing or mining population, be omitted from the group and retained in the county? Indeed it would often happen that the town, the centre of an agricultural district, would have more real affinity to, and a closer connection with, the county out of which it is proposed to take it, than the village a few miles off, which, containing a factory or works of some kind, would be left in it. If, in addition to this initial objection, the practical difficulty which would attend any attempt to segregate the unrepresented towns from the counties be taken into consideration—and a glance at Sir John Hay's ingenious map attached to his scheme of grouping will show how great that difficulty is—we are driven to the conclusion that the object aimed at can best be accomplished by the method adopted by the bill,—one-membered constituencies.

In a system of representation which is based on uniformity, it is no small advantage, when you come to reconstruct the constituencies, to adopt a principle which is capable of application to the whole country, town and county alike; and this advantage is gained by the scheme of the bill. It is said, indeed, that we owe it to the intervention of our leaders, and that the Government are pledged to its maintenance; but whether that be

so or not, we advocate it as the best and most statesmanlike solution of the many difficulties surrounding the whole question of redistribution.

Let us consider, in the first place, its probable operation in the borough constituencies. At the outset, the anomaly of the exception of eighteen large boroughs from the rule encounters us; and while we understand the motives which induced the Government to make that exception, it appears to us quite indefensible, and irreconcilable with the impartial application of the principle. We shall assume, therefore, that the exception will disappear in committee, and the principle of one-membered seats be established throughout the borough as well as the county constituencies. First, then, as to the advantages of the system. To the electors a sense alike of their responsibilities and privileges is brought more closely home. In the large areas of our existing two or three membered constituencies, experience shows at every election an immense number of voters who will not take the trouble of going to the poll—actuated, no doubt, by the feeling that in so vast an electorate it is a matter of practical indifference whether they vote or not. In this way thousands of the more quiet, moderate, and least partisan electors in our great towns habitually refrain from approaching the ballot-boxes. The fact is too notorious to need proof; but it may be pointed out, that even in 1880, when political excitement was stirred to its very depths, in Glasgow not less than 20,000 voters out of 57,000 on the roll abstained from voting; in Manchester, 16,000 out of 61,000; in Finsbury, 17,000 out of 45,000; while in the Tower Hamlets, where

four candidates stood, the two successful ones polled 12,020 and 11,720 respectively, out of a constituency of 41,000. The recent election for Hackney points the same moral still more emphatically; which is further enforced by the far larger proportionate number who poll, as a rule, in the smaller boroughs, where each voter feels his own vote may be of some practical importance to the cause which he, however temperately, espouses.

To the candidates, the relief, social, physical, and pecuniary, is enormous. By the subdivision of the great county areas, with their vast prospective electorates, into manageable constituencies, it will still be possible for representatives of that most valuable class, the untitled English and Scotch gentlemen, of whom the late Mr Henley was so admirable a specimen, to find their way to St. Stephen's, and to retain their seats there without imposing too severe a strain on their health or their resources. And similarly, in the greater boroughs their representation will be brought within the reach of many a man, well qualified to represent his fellow-citizens, who at present cannot face the alarming expense, or still more alarming demands on his time and strength, which have to be met by members for places like Lambeth or Liverpool, Glasgow or Marylebone.

This last consideration brings us to notice the chief objection which has been urged against the division of boroughs—its supposed tendency to “degrade” or “vestrify” the House of Commons. Here, for once, we find ourselves in full agreement with Sir Charles Dilke, whose argument at Aylesbury on

this head we are happy to reproduce:—

“The opponents of the single-member system assume as beyond argument what they call ‘the degradation of the House.’ Now I do not admit that the single-member system will return ‘vestrymen,’ in the bad sense of the word. Where the local man is returned, he will generally be the best local man; while local jealousies will often exclude the local man, and cause all to agree in the selection of a seatless statesman from afar. Under the single-member system the House will, I am convinced, contain a far more varied, complete, and truthful representation of the country than it has ever held before.”¹

We are likewise in accord with him when, arguing against those who would, while applying the single-member system to counties, exempt the towns from its operation, he exclaimed, “It must be everywhere or nowhere. Sauce for the goose, sauce for the gander!” Quite so; but it is precisely in this respect of thoroughness that the bill, as drawn, fails, and is open in our opinion to serious criticism and objection. Why are boroughs with a population between 50,000 and 165,000 exempt from the operation of this salutary rule? The only reason suggested rather than urged by Mr Gladstone in introducing the bill—viz., the existence in many towns of a unity of municipal life—would apply with at least equal force to all the towns except the metropolitan boroughs, which are above the line; and in justice alike to the counties and to the larger boroughs, we claim with Sir Charles Dilke the impartial application of the principle to all constituencies which are susceptible of it. To illustrate the absurdity of the proposed maimed

¹ Sir Charles Dilke at Aylesbury—‘Times,’ December 11, 1884.

adoption of the system, we will cite its results in one midland county—Leicester. Here the number of members to be returned—six—remains unchanged; but its two county divisions—the South with a population of 90,000, the North with 110,000—are to be divided into four single-member districts; while Leicester, with a population larger than either, 123,000, is to remain, like the French republic, one and undivided. One effect of this glaring anomaly will be, that the county electors will be able to vote for only one member, while the borough elector will wield and exercise a dual vote. We shall be much surprised if the counties and the larger boroughs are content that the electors of this privileged class of boroughs shall possess double the voting-power conferred on the rest of the electorate of the United Kingdom. The simple and obvious way of curing this injustice would be to divide the boroughs in question into two constituencies; but if any good reason can be shown, which we doubt, for their retention undivided, then their electors should be allowed to give only one vote apiece. We sincerely hope that this blot in the scheme is not one of the vital principles of the measure to which the Government and the leaders of the Opposition are irretrievably committed.

The only other important feature of the bill to which we think exception may fairly be taken, is the increase of the number of members by twelve—in order, nominally, to give the required addition to Scotland, but in reality to purchase the assent of Ireland and Wales to the whole scheme without offending either Scotland or England. The motive is paltry, the proposal objectionable. It is not many years

ago since a strong Select Committee, presided over by Mr Headlam, reported unanimously in favour of building a new House of Commons, on the ground that the existing Chamber, with its division lobbies, galleries, and offices, was insufficient for the wants and requirements of members. Nothing has occurred since then to diminish those wants and requirements; on the contrary, members are compelled to spend many more hours in the House than they did then, and the demands for space and accommodation in the Peers', the Reporters', and the Strangers' galleries are constantly increasing, while the atmospheric condition of the division lobbies on the occasion of any great division is scandalously bad. On merely physical and structural grounds, therefore, the proposal ought to be resisted.

But when Mr Gladstone's and Lord Hartington's recent complaints of the garrulity of members, and the consequent impediments placed in the way of the proper despatch of business, and the certainty that the further democratisation of the House of Commons will lead to further loquacity, are taken into consideration, the more preposterous will the proposal to add to the numbers of the House appear. With the exception of Mr Parnell and his followers, who naturally encourage any measure which facilitates obstruction and increases confusion, we doubt whether any section of the House is favourable to this method of securing a fair proportion of representation between the component parts of the kingdom. In our last number we indicated the mode by which, in our judgment, that desirable end could best be obtained, and to it we adhere. By bringing the representation of Ire-

land down to that sanctioned by the Act of Union, and by slightly diminishing the superabundant representation of Wales, with the abandonment of the proposed addition to that of England, the claims of Scotland can be fully and legitimately met without adding to the present numbers. In the interest of Scotland, we deprecate in the strongest manner Mr Baxter's unfortunate and unjust attempt to satisfy Scotland at the expense of England; and we earnestly hope that Scotch members as a body will repudiate his unauthorised intervention, which is eminently calculated to defeat the very object they have at heart by the odium it cannot fail to bring on all who support it.

With these two exceptions, then, we are prepared to accept and approve the main lines and provisions of the Redistribution Bill as being the wisest, safest, and most legitimate solution of the great problems raised by the equalisation of the county and borough franchise. The vital question, "How will they work?" remains to be answered—and answered as it only can be, by time and experience. Pragmatical *doctrinaires* like Mr Trevelyan, and urban Radical politicians like Sir Charles Dilke, may vaticinate to their hearts' content as to the inevitable results of the great political revolution, to the accomplishment of which, we readily admit, they have largely contributed. It needed not, however, the 10th Satire of Juvenal to demonstrate the vanity of human wishes; and timid Tories may reassure themselves, in reading the tremendous prophecies of those exulting Ministers, by the reflection that they are, after all, nothing more than the ebullient expression of their individual hopes and

wishes. We shall not, on the other hand, presume to specify any beneficial legislative results as likely to ensue from the adoption of the new representative system, but shall content ourselves with indicating the general effect and influence which it may be expected to have on the policy and destinies of the empire.

We entirely differ from those who anticipate from the rule of the democracy in this country either a selfish insular or a *doctrinaire* cosmopolitan policy. We see nothing in the past history or present tendencies of the British people to justify either anticipation. From the days of the Plantagenets to our own, the people, with Saxon, Scandinavian, Norman blood coursing in their veins, have ever shown themselves willing and eager to transgress their island bounds, and follow their natural leaders on any quest, religious, warlike, commercial, or purely adventurous, to any part of the known or imagined globe. There is no pretence for saying that the sturdy soldiery who followed Richard Cœur de Lion to the Holy Land, or his successors to France—that the adventurers who accompanied Frobisher, Drake, and Raleigh on their romantic if questionable expeditions—that the soldiers of Marlborough and Granby, of Wellington and Raglan, or the sailors of Anson and Howe, of Rodney and Nelson, pressed as many of them were under circumstances of atrocious cruelty and injustice,—according to present views, disliked or condemned the work they were called upon to perform on any religious, political, or economical grounds. Nay, in the very struggle for American independence the great mass of the people of this country were as resolute

as the King himself to maintain what they conceived to be their imperial rights, and to vindicate their claim to rule those boundless territories across the Atlantic. So, too, in the rise and creation of our Indian empire, had Clive and his compeers and successors not found in the temper and genius of their fellow-countrymen sympathy and co-operation, their capacity and courage would have accomplished no more enduring results than followed the brilliant achievements of Dupleix and Labourdonnais. The remarkable expansion of colonising enterprise which has characterised the last half-century is but a peaceful development of the same spirit; and recent events have shown how completely those politicians were deceived who imagined that they who remained at home no longer regarded those who had left their island home as members of the same empire, subjects of the same sovereign. No: the deeper we strike down to the roots of our national life, the more imperial shall we find the soil out of which they spring; and that imperial federation, which is now exercising the thoughts and stirring the imagination of a few far-seeing statesmen and political philosophers, will receive an unexpected impetus and support from below.

On the other hand, that *doctrinaire* cosmopolitanism which constitutes the foreign policy of Mr Gladstone and modern Radicalism, is equally alien to the genuine sentiments of the people. It was not to vindicate the abstract right of Servians or Bulgarians to govern themselves that any large body of the people followed Mr Gladstone's Russian banner in 1877; it was the stories, true or false, of the atrocities inflicted upon them, which gave that unscrupulous ora-

tor his power over popular opinion: and follies such as the restoration of Cetewayo to Zululand, the treatment of the freebooting Government of the Transvaal as a well-ordered responsible State, and the assumption that our costly and sanguinary campaigns in Egypt are to end in nothing better than the precarious re-establishment of Tewfik on the throne of that country, separated by an imaginary line from the Soudán, will find, we are convinced, no toleration among the classes from which our sailors and soldiers, upon whom fell the weight and burden of those abnormal enterprises, are taken. Still less do we believe that the hardy sons of toil will be satisfied with the extinction, one by one, of the industries on which they depend for support, or reconciled to it by the abstract theories of the Board of Trade and the Cobden Club. It is satisfactory to notice that the first labour candidate who has been invited to stand for a purely working man's constituency is Mr George Potter, who, whatever may be his political faults in other matters, has the courage and good sense to adopt, in matters affecting industry and the colonies, a patriotic and imperial policy; and there is good reason to hope that through the increased number of county divisions a larger body of English and Scotch country gentlemen will appear at St Stephen's in the new Parliament than in any which has assembled there since 1832.

While, however, we thus take a cheerful view of the general spirit which will characterise and direct the revolutionised House of Commons, we are by no means insensible to the risks and dangers which beset so democratic a body as it will necessarily become. Passion, impatience, incapacity to see all

the bearings of a particular movement or measure, undue readiness to believe that which it wishes to believe, and an arrogant contempt for views antagonistic to its own—these constitute the principal dangers of the future House of Commons of the United Kingdom. These dangers, we believe, will be diminished by the operation of the single-membered system, and by the gradual reaction of our self-governed colonies on public opinion at home, which will in time exercise a steadying effect on our domestic as well as our colonial and foreign policy.

But when all proper allowance is made for these conservative influences, it can hardly be doubted that the new constitution of the House of Commons will cast an additional burden on the restraining and moderating functions of what Mr Lecky terms “the other branches of the Legislature,” in a passage which merits careful attention :—

“The increasing democratic character and the increasing strength of the House of Commons may make it impossible for it to co-operate with the other branches of the Legislature; and the constant intervention of the House in the proceedings of the Executive, and of the constituencies in the proceedings of the House, may profoundly alter its character as a legislative body. Governments living from day to day, looking only for immediate popularity, and depending on the fluctuating and capricious favour of great multitudes who have no settled political opinions, may gradually lose all firmness and tenacity; and all power of muscular contraction, all power of restraining, controlling, or resisting, may thus pass out of the body politic.”¹

These grave and weighty words

of warning invest with peculiar interest and importance the recent action and future position of the House of Lords. Will it be impossible, as Mr Lecky seems to fear, and sundry Radical orators hope, for the democratised House of Commons to co-operate with the hereditary House of Lords? The origin, progress, and end of the recent constitutional struggle seem to us to warrant a negative reply. The origin of the struggle was a demand on the part of the House of Lords to be consulted in any organic change even of the other legislative Chamber. In its progress, not only was that demand ridiculed, but the very existence of the body making it was challenged and threatened. In the end the demand was conceded, and the House of Lords has acquired a stronger hold in the esteem of the people, and increased influence in the councils of the State.

If we were to qualify at all the general approval of the “peace with honour” which terminated the struggle, it would be on the ground that it has left the Radical agitators the power of saying that the question of the House of Lords has not been finally decided, and that on the next convenient opportunity—i.e., whenever they again do their duty—it shall be reopened, and their independent existence destroyed. Language of that kind has, we notice with regret, been held even by so cautious a speaker as Mr Campbell-Bannerman. Now, had Mr Gladstone persevered, and brought the constitutional position of the House of Lords to a direct issue at the polling-booths, we are convinced an enormous majority would have declared in

¹ Lecky's History, vol. iii. p. 226.

favour of the existing Constitution, and the question would have been set at rest for the remainder of this century. As it is, the constitutional party must be on the alert, and prepared to defend the rights and independence of the hereditary Chamber whenever and by whomsoever attacked.

Behind that august body stands the still more august figure of the hereditary head of the State—the Sovereign ; and the battle, waged

nominally in defence of the first, will practically determine in its result the fate of both institutions.

May the new electors and the new constituencies realise the grandeur and the difficulty of their task, and by their prudence, self-control, and courage, reconcile the glorious traditions of the past with the institutions of the present and the developing empire of the future !

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF GEORGE ELIOT.

It is not to be supposed that so remarkable a specimen of the human intellect as George Eliot's should have passed through its early stages without giving signs of what manner of spirit had come among us. While still making an idol of her doll, she was filled with that passion for books which invariably marks the childhood of those endowed with a powerful literary faculty. A child who loves meditation, or the observation of nature, or the practical work of life, better than books, may become a remarkable person,—a philosopher, a discoverer, or an organiser; but the literary genius must in early life be fed upon books, and these not few in number nor peculiar in scope, but embracing a wide range of subjects and of writers. In the young mind so predestined and so nourished, what is poor and bad passes off, what is good is retained; the more various the material, the richer the result—namely, that power of expressing the best ordered thought in the best ordered language which constitutes excellence of style. Whether a really omnivorous young reader, seizing on and assimilating all kinds of lore (and this wide ranging and wide pasturing is very uncommon even among children who are said to be fond of books), will become a fine writer, may be augured with a good deal of certainty by a little observation. If the effect be to puff him up, to cause him to put away childish things, to seek grave converse and the praise of his elders, he will probably develop into one of those fluent phenomenons, oracles of the general herd (always gregarious of opinion), who possess a fatal facility of expatiating in oily sermons, gushing essays, copious journals, trivial histories, or pretentious novels. But if he preserve his

George Eliot's Life, as related in her Letters and Journals. Arranged and edited by her husband, J. W. Cross. In 3 vols. William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London. 1885.

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freshness of interest in all that charms the young, the chances are many in favour of his development into one of those artists of the pen whose works will live and nourish the writers of the future. Where opportunities are small, much will depend on the character of the books at hand. Mary Ann Evans's home was not apparently very copiously supplied, but she was fortunate in those volumes which she could make her own. An old gentleman, nameless, but evidently worth crowds of ordinary old gentlemen in knowing the right thing and doing it, used to bring her sometimes a book as an offering, and among them the *Fables of Æsop*—so sure, with their four-footed and feathered representatives of the wise and the foolish, to expand the imagination of the imaginative child, the sympathies of the sympathetic. An old copy of the *'Pilgrim's Progress,'* with illustrations less artistic but more in unison with the ideas of John Bunyan than would probably spring from a modern pencil, was always at hand to lead her into a supernatural world, with its mysterious scenery of the House Beautiful, the Delectable Mountains, and the dreadful valley, and with such tremendous inhabitants as Giant Despair and Apollyon lurking in its recesses. Another much studied theological work, also illustrated, was Defoe's *'History of the Devil.'* A less formidable morality was represented by *'Rasselas,'* tedious only to readers whose appetite has grown fastidious with years. In relief to these grave works stood the jest-book of Joe Miller, the somewhat practical and unrefined character of whose mirth was corrected a little later by the gentler and chaster humour of Elia. It was not till the advanced age of eight that she became enamoured of the *Waverley*

Novels; and then what a share must those great romances have had in forming the future Eliot! Is it possible that she could ever have become what she did if for these had been substituted, let us say, the monstrous indigestibilities of Mr. George Macdonald or Mr. Wilkie Collins? So far, however, was she from growing proud as the possessor of all this lore, that she used to follow, like a small dog, the footsteps of a three-years older brother, who, after the manner of well-conditioned males of that time of life, permitted himself to be adored with much condescension and consideration. This fraternal alliance was, of course, the origin of the relations of Tom and Maggie Tulliver. It was interrupted by a pony, given to the boy, who found the quadruped a more interesting associate than the sister. The fact that Isaac Evans never became anything uncommon, remaining very much like his neighbours in pursuits and character, does not render in the least less natural the fact that he was worshipped by the little female genius. It is only commonplace little girls who are not prone to admire boys merely because they are boys, and with no more real ground than that on which the British public sometimes grows fatuous in its worship of tinselled and trumpery idols.

The little girl had another object of reverence in a father who had probably so much, and no more, of Mr. Tulliver as to pet her, to call her his 'cute little wenoh, and possibly to be very earnest in his denunciation of those diabolic agencies "raskills"; but who had much more (though still with great diversity) in common with both Adam Bede and Caleb Garth, Probably the former represents him when an artisan in his youth.

the latter in his elder phase, for Mr. Evans became a first-rate land agent, knowing thoroughly all the branches of that interesting business; as manly, indefatigable, conscientious, clever, and devoted to his calling as the two ideal characters. It is mere commonplace to a thinking person to be told that delineators of character seldom copy from originals after the fashions of portrait-painters. Every novelist must have been worried by simpletons who, incapable of conceiving such a thing as a creative faculty, press for information as to who it was that sat for this or that character, and are much exasperated that the imaginary secret, by promulgating which they hoped to gain great social distinction, should be withheld from them. Few characters could be transferred bodily to a book with advantage to it. As Romeo, according to Juliet, might be out in little stars, so a strong individuality like that of Robert Evans may be made to give life and reality to a dozen men of fiction. His wife, pale, energetic, a good housewife and a warm-hearted mother, contained the germs, and more, of the celebrated Mrs Poyser. There was an elder daughter, Chrissey, who married early when Mary Ann was sixteen, and was thenceforward lost to view, though not to memory, for the recollection of the relation between the sisters suggested that between Celia and Dorothea Brooke, and the delineation of Celia was the result of a remembrance of Chrissey, though it could not be called a portrait.

The musing, observant, sensitive, deeply impressionable child lived with this family in Warwickshire, in a house bearing the curious name of Griff, of red brick covered with ivy, and having, like Mr Poyser's, a farmyard, barns, and

large dairy. It stood, we are told, in a very flat uninteresting landscape of green fields and hedgerows. But there is something in the smallness of a child which prevents flatness from being uninteresting; to a creature who is too short to see over the smallest fence, and who is hidden by a gooseberry-bush, every knoll is a mountain, every thicket a forest. Moreover, the unattractiveness of the landscape may have intensified the zest derived from the scenes of imagination in Bunyan and Scott; so that, on the whole, the flat fields may have been quite as useful in their way as if the happy valley of Rasselas had stretched from the door.

It need not be said how deep was the impression made on Mary Ann by the scenes and characters which surrounded her childhood, though at that period she saw these only at intervals, for at the age of five she went with her brother to a boarding-school till she was eight, when she was sent with Chrissey to a much larger establishment at Nuneaton, and remained there up to the age of thirteen. In all scholastic studies, then and afterwards, she showed capacity and power unequalled by any of her schoolmates. For accomplishments, she was an enthusiastic musician, and she took a singular pleasure in the study of modern languages. But the circumstance of this period which chiefly concerns the reader is, that at this second school the principal teacher, Miss Lewis, was an ardent evangelical Churchwoman, and became, and continued for years to be, her young pupil's most intimate friend. Always uncommonly susceptible of the influence of those around her, Mary Ann must have been especially so at this early age; and her ardent temper

would lead her, particularly with the encouragement of example, to push any strong tendency to an extreme. Deeply influenced by the religious views of Miss Lewis, she came under other and still stronger tendencies from thirteen to sixteen, which period she spent at another school kept by the daughters of a Baptist minister in Coventry, where, we learn, she became a leader of prayer-meetings amongst the girls. When she was sixteen she lost her mother, and returned home to keep house for her father, the elder sister having married about that time; and now it happened that the practice of her religious principles, bordering on asceticism, placed her in antagonism with her brother. Isaac was fond of sports and pleasures, and had, moreover, imbibed strong High Church views. His sister not only opposed him with argument, but with a strictness of life which must have looked like a reproach. As she says of Maggie Tulliver, "she threw some exaggeration and wilfulness, some pride and impetuosity, even into her self-renunciation." To her "the pursuit of pleasure was a snare, dress was vanity, society was a danger." In her first visit to London with her brother, when she was eighteen, she would not accompany him to the theatres, but spent all her evenings alone reading. To the evangelical religion she had (she avowed at a later time) sacrificed the cultivation of her intellect, and a proper regard to personal appearance. "I used," she said, "to go about like an owl, to the great disgust of my brother; and I would have denied him what I now see to have been quite lawful amusements." A curious confirmation of what she says of sacrificing the cultivation of her intellect, is found in reading her letters of this period to Miss Lewis.

Nothing connected with George Eliot can be more curious, for one who remembers what her formed style was—how studiously truthful in rendering the subject-matter, how careful in the exclusion of conventionalities—than to mark how she adopted the very phraseology of her religious friends. Of the marriage of an acquaintance she writes:—

"I must believe that those are happiest who are not fermenting themselves by engaging in projects for earthly bliss, who are considering this life merely a pilgrimage, a scene calling for diligence and watchfulness, not for repose and amusement. I do not deny that there may be many who can partake with a high degree of zest of all the lawful enjoyments the world can offer, and yet live in near communion with their God—who can warmly love the creature, and yet be careful that the Creator maintains His supremacy in their hearts; but I confess that in my short experience and narrow sphere of action I have never been able to attain to this. I find, as Dr Johnson said respecting his wine, total abstinence much easier than moderation. . . . I have highly enjoyed Hannah More's letters: the contemplation of so blessed a character as hers is very salutary. . . . Oh that we could live only for eternity! that we could realise its nearness! I know you do not love quotations, so I will not give you one; but if you do not distinctly remember it, do turn to the passage in Young's 'Infidel Reclaimed,' beginning, 'O vain, vain, vain all else eternity,' and do love the lines for my sake. . . .

"I have just begun the life of Wilberforce, and I am expecting a rich treat from it. There is a similarity, if I may compare myself with such a man, between his temptations, or rather *besetments*, and my own, that makes his experience very interesting to me. Oh that I might be made as useful in my lowly and obscure station as he was in the exalted one assigned to him! I feel myself to be a mere cumberer of the ground. May the

Lord give me such an insight into what is truly good, that I may not rest contented with making Christianity a mere addendum to my pursuits, or with tacking it as a fringe to my garments! May I seek to be sanctified wholly! My nineteenth birthday will soon be here (the 22d)—an awakening signal. My mind has been much clogged lately by languor of body, to which I am prone to give way, and for the removal of which I shall feel thankful."

Music had not only been for her an enthusiastic study, but an extraordinary enjoyment; nevertheless she says:—

"It would not cost me any regrets if the only music heard in our land were that of strict worship; nor can I think a pleasure that involves the devotion of all the time and powers of an immortal being to the acquirement of an expertness in so useless (at least in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred) an accomplishment, can be quite pure or elevating in its tendency."

Now her present biographer has judiciously refrained from signifying any approval or disapproval on this or the future phase of her theological opinions. It would be futile to argue a matter on which most readers must have made up their minds, and he evidently thinks that his business is to present the woman of genius in all the main circumstances of her life, and to leave the reader to draw his own conclusions. A cheap and easy effect might be gained by taking either side, but we shall follow the course of the biographer. Our only comment on the foregoing extracts will be of a literary kind. They prove that if she had held to her opinions, not only there could have been no 'Adam Bede,' 'Mill on the Floss,' or other novels; but she could never have achieved literary excellence of any kind, because her thoughts were working

in a quite uncongenial medium, and the more she wrote in this style, the farther would she diverge from the path that afterwards led her to fame. The opinion of the future novelist about fiction at the age of twenty was uncompromisingly severe.

"I venture to believe," she writes, "that the same causes which exist in my own breast to render novels and romances pernicious, have their counterpart in that of every fellow-creature. . . . As to the discipline our minds receive from the perusal of fictions, I can conceive none that is beneficial but may be attained by that of history. It is the merit of fictions to come within the orbit of probability: if unnatural they would no longer please. If it be said the mind must have relaxation, 'Truth is strange—stranger than fiction.' When a person has exhausted the wonders of truth, there is no other resort than fiction: till then, I cannot imagine how the adventures of some phantom, conjured up by fancy, can be more entertaining than the transactions of real specimens of human nature from which we may safely draw inferences. I daresay Mr. James's 'Huguenot' would be recommended as giving an idea of the times of which he writes; but as well may one be recommended to look at landscapes for an idea of English scenery. The real secret of the relaxation talked of is one that would not generally be avowed; but an appetite that wants seasoning of a certain kind cannot be indicative of health. Religious novels are more hateful to me than merely worldly ones: they are a sort of centaur or mermaid, and, like other monsters that we do not know how to class, should be destroyed for the public good as soon as born. The weapons of the Christian warfare were never sharpened at the forge of romance. Domestic fictions, as they come more within the range of imitation, seem more dangerous. For my part, I am ready to sit down and weep at the impossibility of my understanding or barely knowing a fraction of the sum of objects that present themselves for

our contemplation in books and in life. Have I, then, any time to spend on things that never existed?"

She wrote a religious poem (not, in our judgment, a good one), in which, when bidding farewell to the things of earth, she implies an expectation that she will take the Bible (apostrophised as "blest volume!") to heaven with her—a sentiment objected to by the editor of the '*Christian Observer*,' in which the stanzas appeared, because, he said, there would be no need of a Bible there. A more prosaic but still devout occupation was the construction of a chart of ecclesiastical history, which she only gave up on finding her plan forestalled. Nevertheless, while still, apparently imbued with the faith she had held so firmly and almost aggressively from childhood, it is certain that she had already passed from the receptive to the critical stage of religion, and that her analytical faculty was already at work on the influences which had so controlled her conduct and daily life, for she was reading controversial works, and was much exercised about "the nature of the visible Church." The change of opinion which was impending, and perhaps in any case inevitable, was hastened by an important event which now took place in her life. Her brother married, and it had been agreed that he should occupy Griff, while his father and sister removed to a house near Coventry. Here she found next-door neighbours who, besides being cultivated people, were philosophical sceptics, and who did something more with their views than merely to entertain them. Mr Bray, an ardent phrenologist, had written on '*The Philosophy of Necessity*,' and had married a sister of Mr Hennell, who had just published '*An In-*

quiry concerning the Origin of Christianity,' which had been translated into German, with a preface written by Strauss. Miss Evans was at first invited to their house as a person whose ability and fervent religious views might be useful in bringing back Mr Bray to the fold of the Church. Although, after her arrival at the new house, she wrote to her friend Miss Lewis in the former religious strain, yet her views of the subject must have been already shifting, for a complete change in them presently took place.

"It will be seen," says the biographer, "from subsequent letters, how greatly Miss Evans was interested in this book [Mr Hennell's]—how much she admired it; and the reading of it, combined with the association with her new friends—with the philosophical speculations of Mr Bray, and with Mrs Bray's sympathy in her brother's critical and sceptical standpoint—no doubt hastened the change in her attitude towards the dogmas of the old religion."

She seems to have made the acquaintance of these neighbours just ten days before the date of a letter to Miss Lewis, in which she says:—

"My whole soul has been engrossed in the most interesting of all inquiries for the last few days, and to what result my thoughts may lead I know not—possibly to one that will startle you; but my only desire is to know the truth, my only fear to cling to error. I venture to say our love will not decompose under the influence of separation, unless you excommunicate me for differing from you in opinion."

A month later, the intended reclamer of the stray sheep, Mr Bray, "was so uneasy in an equivocal position that she determined to give up going to church." This nearly led to a rupture with her father, who talked

of giving up his new house and going to live with his married daughter: it was not till after Mary Ann had planned to live apart, and had begun by going on a visit to her brother, that "the father was very glad to receive her again, and she resumed going to church as before." But so far was she from returning, otherwise than externally, to the church, that we find her later writing, "When the soul is just liberated from the wretched giant's bed of dogmas on which it has been racked and stretched ever since it began to think, there is a feeling of exaltation and strong hope." Her new correspondent (for we find no more letters to Miss Lewis) was a lady of strong intellect and advanced opinions—Miss Sara Hennell, the sister of the author of the "Inquiry"; and henceforward she lived with the two sisters and Mr Bray in the closest intimacy and friendship, making excursions with them about the country, and imparting to them her inmost mind. In 1844, Mr Hennell married Miss Brabant, whose father was the friend of Strauss, Coleridge, and Grote, and who had been chosen to translate Strauss's 'Leben Jesu.' This task she persuaded Miss Evans to relieve her of, who, during the next two years, performed it most faithfully, for the translation was very highly esteemed by English disciples of Strauss, and reviewers did not fail to extol the excellence of the style. And that her change of opinion was not a half-hearted one, and was accompanied by no regrets, is evident from her mention of a certain subject as one she should like to work out—namely, "The superiority of the consolations of philosophy to those of so-called religion." It may almost be said that she threw off what had hitherto been the gloomy in-

fluence dominating her life and conduct, with the suddenness and completeness of a rustic who, long terrified by a ghost in the churchyard, at length grapples with it, and finds it to consist of a sheet and a luminous turnip. Not the least notable of her minor changes of opinion is that respecting Mrs Hannah More, the former contemplation of whose blessed character had been so very salutary. "I am glad you detest Mrs Hannah More's letters. I like neither her letters, nor her books, nor her character." Which of these diverse opinions of the good lady may be correct is a question that the present writer does not feel himself competent to decide.

When Miss Evans was thirty her father died. The Brays happened to be then starting on a Continental trip, and she being without a home, was glad to accompany them. At the end of the tour they left her at Geneva, where she determined to spend some months. It happened to her almost miraculously often that her chance associates proved to be remarkable people, entering into and making part of her life, and it was her hap to become a lodger in the house of Monsieur and Madame d'Albert Durade, who, perfect strangers to her when she sought their abode, turned out to be friends after her own heart, and so always continued. Her life in Geneva, planned to suit herself, while giving ample freedom and leisure, was brightened by these agreeable friends and their visitors; the scenery was full of charm and interest; and her letters express the delight in which this episode of her existence was passed, and the real grief she felt when it came to an end in March 1850. But we should not have paused on it, even for this brief space, except to note that this resting-place, full of

refreshment and repose, afforded the opportunity of facing what lay before her, and of considering how she should make herself a new home, and how shape her new life. Accordingly, on her return to England she very soon entered on an arduous occupation. It was for Mr Chapman that she had translated Strauss, and another German freethinker's book, and he proposed to her that she should become assistant editor of the 'Westminster Review,' living in his house in the Strand as a boarder. This position, which she at once accepted, brought her directly into contact with many eminent personages. Emerson and Froude she had already met at the Brays'; Mill, Carlyle, Miss Martineau, Browning, Mazzini, Dickens, she became acquainted with through the Review or its editor, together with many who were pushing to the front as "advanced thinkers,"—and with most of these she had numerous points of sympathy. But it must be noted here, out of regard for the prepossessions of the many who fail to give to those known as strong-minded women the admiration which their virile qualities might seem to merit, that George Eliot was never in that sense a strong-minded woman,—that while possessed of immense intellectual force, capable of grappling with the highest problems and most arduous tasks, she was of a moral nature tender, sympathetic, impulsive, and womanly, possibly in some things even womanish, and liable to be convicted by the truly strong-minded of her sex of what they might think a thousand weaknesses.

Among those whose lasting friendship with her began at this time was Mr Herbert Spencer, and he it was that introduced her to the man who was henceforward to be

the predominating influence of her life. George Henry Lewes, a year or two older than she, though by no means so well known to the world as he afterwards became, held already a good position in letters. He was editor of a weekly paper—the 'Leader'; he was known as a man of science by his 'History of Philosophy'; as a novelist by 'Ranthorpe' and 'Rose, Blanche, and Violet'; and he had contributed many essays to periodical literature. Uncommonly well read, even for an habitual student, he was a most agreeable companion, genial, easy, friendly in approach, ready to engage in give and take, on any subject, and sure to bear a clever, entertaining part in it. It is evident that from the first he and Miss Evans attracted each other, and we soon find her letters beginning to contain frequent notices of "Lewes," and Lewes's state of health. Probably a womanly compassion at first counted for something in the intimacy, for his domestic circumstances were unhappy, his married home having been spoiled and broken up two years before. On his side the admiration amounted to a kind of worship—he became, and ever continued to be, one of a sect of disciples who made belief in her wisdom and goodness a kind of religion. As the intimacy progressed, her reciprocation of his complete attachment grew so strong as to impel her to cast in her lot with his. A word of farewell to her three friends at Coventry, when setting off with him for a tour on the Continent, told of the beginning of her union with Lewes.

Thus, for the second time, she had taken a step in life which she knew must place her in an attitude of estrangement from, or antagonism with, many of her own circle of friends, and with whole sections

of society at large. And for the second time, as it proved, this step was of the first importance in the development of her genius. Whatever the world may think it has gained in her writings, it would not have gained if she had not, first, changed her opinions, and, next, formed this union with Lewes. She might have searched all society through without finding a companion so fertilising to her intellect. She was eminently one whose self-confidence required to be aroused and constantly reassured; sympathy, praise, and encouragement were indispensable to her in pursuing tasks more ambitious, and demanding the exercise of far higher qualities, than the writing of a review. It is quite possible that this great novelist might have gone on all her life writing articles and reviews, unknown except to a coterie, had she not been roused to higher action by the counsel and example of Lewes. In this first trip to the Continent, while she was still engaged on contributions to the 'Westminster,' he was re-writing and completing, partly in Weimar itself, the stronghold of his hero, 'The Life of Goethe,' a work which at once brought him a wide extension of repute. A little later he urged her to try her hand at an original work—and now, and now only, can she be said to have entered on the approaches to her remarkable career. An inscription on the manuscript of her first novel, giving it to Lewes, says it "would never have been written but for the happiness which his love has conferred on my life." Henceforward the pair form a remarkable picture, working industriously in their home, each finding in the other not merely an acute critic, but one bending all the energies of the mind to the consideration of what the other laid

before it—all failure to appreciate made impossible by affection, but all undue or careless approval made equally impossible by a judgment too clear, and a taste too exacting, to let anything pass which seemed short of excellence. It is hardly a mere guess that a passage written a few years later in 'Adam Bede' describes the result of that union as it appeared to her then, and as it promised (and promised truly) for the future:—

"What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life—to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain—to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?"

It was in September 1856, she being then thirty-seven, and having never attempted a tale of any sort, that, after much urging by Lewes, she made her first essay in fiction. She had always been haunted by a vague dream that some day she might write a novel, but as time wore on without the effort being made, she lost hope of this. She fancied she might succeed in description, but would fail in construction and dialogue. Lewes, too, did not feel sure that her work would show dramatic power, but used to say, "You have wit, description, and philosophy,—these go a good way towards the production of a novel. It is worth while for you to try the experiment." Her idea was to write a series of stories drawn from her own observation of the clergy. Why one who had ceased to believe that the clergy represented an authentic religion should have chosen that of all subjects, does not appear; but it became abundantly evident in the course of her writings that not a vestige of prejudice existed to pre-

vent her from doing amplest justice to the highest points of a sincere Christian, whether Churchman or Dissenter. Perhaps it seemed to her that such a one might be drawn best from the outside, and from an absolutely neutral point of view. In six weeks the story was finished, and sent by Lewes to Blackwood, as the work of "a friend who desired his good offices."

John Blackwood gave the tale all that anxious consideration which he used to bestow on every new contribution of promise. With his usual intuition he perceived that, if the work of a new hand, it contained the promise of uncommon success. Never one of those who think it wise to be chary of praise, and liking the story better the more he considered it, he wrote her many sympathetic and encouraging letters; and it was in reply to one of these (he having then no suspicion that his contributor was a woman) that she took for a signature the name by which henceforth she was identified in the world of letters, choosing George because it was Lewes's name, and Eliot as a fluent and euphonious accompaniment. "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story" and "Janet's Repentance" followed (all making their first appearance in the Magazine), and excited interest and speculation to a degree quite uncommon in the case of an anonymous writer treating of themes so level with ordinary life. When published in a collected form, the presentation copies brought acknowledgments from many whose praise was fame. Her old acquaintance Froude, completely mystified, did not know whether he was addressing his eulogy to "a young man or an old—a clergyman or a layman." Mrs Carlyle wrote one of her clever, unconventional, characteristic letters, and says she

has conceived the writer in her mind as

"a man of middle age, with a wife, from whom he has got those beautiful *feminine* touches in his book—a good many children, and a dog that he has as much fondness for as I have for my little Nero! For the rest, not just a clergyman, but brother or first cousin to a clergyman."

Dickens wrote her a letter which all his admirers will be glad of—not only warm and generous in appreciation, but most acute in piercing the veil of her *incognito* and pseudonym. He stood quite alone in his shrewd and confident guess:—

"I have observed what seemed to me such womanly touches in those moving fictions, that the assurance on the title-page is insufficient to satisfy me even now. If they originated with no woman, I believe that no man ever before had the art of making himself mentally so like a woman since the world began."

When John Blackwood came to town at this time, and called on Lewes, she consented to reveal herself to that genial friend and editor—titles almost synonymous in his case; for so warm was his sympathy with literary excellence, that the instances, if any, must be few where contributors whom he valued did not find in him a friend for life. It really might be said of him that the business aspect of the relation was the one least present to his mind. His good-fellowship would not let him preserve a formal attitude towards his associates. Next to his natural kin, he placed in affection those to whom he was bound by literary ties; he always seemed to regard his contributors as an unending Christmas-party, gathered together under the jovial auspices of the Magazine. His friendliness invariably tended to express itself in hospitality; he

would joyously devise dinners for bringing old and new supporters of the Magazine pleasantly together, and many a famous book or paper has owed its germ, or part of its merit, to ideas struck out in his dining-room in Edinburgh, or at his cheerful Fifeshire home of Strathtyrum. George Eliot at once, and ever after, cordially recognised what she felt to be her good fortune in lighting on a publisher so genial: her previous ideas of publishers had probably run altogether on formal letters, interviews in offices, dry estimates, and balance-sheets; and there was something of surprise at finding how the business transactions were so mixed up with good offices and friendly care for her interests as to be entirely transfigured. In acknowledging some favourable criticisms which he had transmitted, she says:—

“I am like a deaf person, to whom some one has just shouted that the company round him have been paying him compliments for the last half-hour. Let the best come, you will still be the person outside my own home who *first* gladdened me about ‘Adam Bede,’ and my success will always please me the better because you will share the pleasure.”

In the ‘Scenes of Clerical Life’ she had depicted many real persons so truthfully that there was general recognition of them by their former neighbours at Nun-eaton; insomuch that an inhabitant of the place, aided by her *incognito*, was tempted to lay claim to the authorship of her works, and actually got some foolish persons to believe in him. But she perceived this kind of portraiture to be not artistically the best. In her next book, while drawing largely on her recollections of what she had seen and heard in early life, she pursued the truer method of

using these as materials which imagination should mould for a purpose. In reading ‘Adam Bede,’ it is impossible not to perceive her inestimable good fortune in having a social origin no higher than to be the daughter of a man who began life as a master-carpenter, and ended it as a land agent. Most persons born in a station favourable to the writing of novels, stand far from the inner life of the classes socially beneath them. But here we have the quite new combination of the highest culture dealing with the life of the working classes from their own standpoint. Among the infinite advantages resulting from this, it was one quite unshared by any other writer to have had an aunt who was a Methodist preacher. Years before, this old lady, then about sixty, paid her niece a visit at Griff, and told, among other experiences of her career as an evangelist, how she had once been called on to comfort the last moments in prison of a country girl, condemned for the murder of her infant, and had accompanied her in the cart to the scaffold. This tale had made a deep impression on Mary Ann; and when, after her first success with the shorter tales, she resolved to try whether she could write a novel, she took this incident as the groundwork of her plot: and thus it chanced that all the charming lifelike personages of the tale—all the humorous and pathetic scenes which place ‘Adam Bede’ at the head of representations of rural life—received their being from a source which appears to us the least real or admirable part of the work.

It was only the suggestion of Dinah which was derived from the Methodist aunt. That real personage was a little black-eyed woman, full of zeal, but destitute of the grace, the restraint and re-

finement of enthusiasm, the power of charm, which individualise Dinah. Whether that highly pitched nature was true to itself in consenting to marry the stalwart Adam, we will not undertake to say. No doubt, the later scenes are among the best in the book; no doubt, the reader, not being himself a religious enthusiast, approves of this pretty devout woman turning out to be "not too bright and good for human nature's daily food"—and a reader's content is a legitimate aim in art: nevertheless, we are not sure that this pleasing end is not gained by some sacrifice of identity in the heroine; we are not sure that young Mrs Bede is exactly the same person as Dinah Morris, or has not undergone some declination from that spiritual creature. However that may be, this consummation was early decreed by the author. Lewes, after hearing the opening of the book, suggested that Dinah should marry Adam. It was an obvious enough suggestion, from a plot-making point of view, and was at once accepted; so that from the third chapter the story bent itself to that comfortable catastrophe.

The artistic value of George Eliot's religious experiences in enabling her to create this her highest character, and many others in that and later novels, is at least as notable as in the Clerical series. Without this element no picture of working life would be true; it is in that class to which existence is so earnest, in which its evils are so strongly present, and in which reason is but a weak check on impulse, that the religious sentiment is most powerful and contagious. But it is an element very difficult to introduce and to blend harmoniously with the others; and the excellence of

the result is in this case proportionate to the power demanded, for extraordinary force is thus given to the pictures of artisan and peasant life. In dealing with the more worldly aspect of these, the experiences of her early home are no less important. Her father's daughter, when moving amidst the details of the carpenter's shop, of the farm, of the dairy, was on familiar ground. While keeping house for Robert Evans, she had herself had butter on her mind, and had learned the difficulty of making a farm pay; she had studied from the life the labourers of the field and the cowshed; she had witnessed the amenities and appreciated the joys of a harvest-supper. Bartle Massey, the schoolmaster, too quaint and animated a character not to have had some grains of reality, may have often looked in for a gossip at Griff; and it must have been recollection, too, that supplied the outward signs of a healthy old age in the elder Martin Poyser. Mrs Poyser, the next best after Dinah, we take it, of her characters, owed her distinctive wit mostly to imagination: the many sagacious apothegms of that practical woman are the golden coinage of her creator's brain.

It seems now merely a matter of course that an immense extension of reputation should have at once followed on the publication of 'Adam Bede,' which took place in February 1859. In March, Blackwood wrote to tell her she was "a popular author as well as a great author." Bulwer, whose opinion she thought much of, wrote to Blackwood a letter about the book, which, as might be expected from him, was generously appreciative. "The success," she says, "has been triumphantly beyond anything I had dreamed of." The

novel fixed her place in literature, and fixed it so high that it became in some respects a discouragement to her self-distrustful temperament, projecting a dark rather than a luminous shadow on the future, by rendering it so difficult to be equal to herself in a new production. But, very ambitious by nature, and full of ideas to which she was irresistibly impelled to give expression, she found, if not confidence, courage to enter on a new novel. We do not learn by any means so much about either the motive, the framework, or the execution of this as of the former work. It is evident enough that in the recollections of the fraternal relations between her and Isaac the book originated, growing naturally, as it went on, out of *Book the First*, "Boy and Girl"; and this view is confirmed by the fact that the name first bestowed on the novel was 'Sister Maggie.' Comparing it, while in its early stage, with 'Adam,' she says,— "The characters are on a lower level generally, and the environment less romantic." She expresses doubt and distrust from time to time, and describes herself as "a prisoner in the Castle of Giant Despair, who growls in my ear that the 'Mill on the Floss' is detestable." Nevertheless, the reception of the work brought her full content. It was recognised as of the same brand as 'Adam.' At this time there is no reason, as there was then, for desiring to prove that each succeeding work is as good as its predecessors; and we believe the author was right about "the lower level." The Tullivers are inferior to the Bedes in simplicity, force, and interest; the Gleggs, Dodsons, and Pulletts are ordinary compared with the tenants of the Hall Farm, and their characteristics are exaggerated into

grotesqueness; while the tragedy of the end handicaps the book, as a disastrous close always does, unless, as in the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' the whole tone and atmosphere is so sombre that no other kind of conclusion is artistically possible—a reason not present here; for Bulwer pointed out, and George Eliot admitted as a fault, that the tragedy is not adequately prepared—meaning, doubtless, that there is nothing in the course of the tale so ruinous of happiness, or so unredeemable, as to render a tragic conclusion inevitable. But throughout the work the same hand is evident as that which wrought 'Adam Bede': the style is no less careful and finished; the views of life are no less original and uncommon; and the general reader, thus assured that the guidance was as strong as ever, was content to follow whithersoever it might lead.

In the same year in which 'The Mill on the Floss' was written, she made a first visit to Italy. Of its great cities none made so deep an impression on her as Florence; and its treasures of art, of scenery, and of history, inspired her with the idea of writing an historical romance, of which it should be the scene. The same strong tendency which had led her to interfuse in former works the evangelical and the Methodist spirit, now impelled her to choose for the groundwork of her subject the career and martyrdom of Savonarola. To qualify herself for the task of representing the costume and social life of the period, she saturated her mind with Italian lore, and made a second visit to Florence; and in 'Romola,' which appeared in the 'Cornhill Magazine,' satisfied her admirers that she had lost none of her strength in dealing with a long-past epoch in a foreign land. But

before it began to appear, she had published, with Blackwood, the one-volume novel of 'Silas Marner,' a tale of old-fashioned village life, arising out of her dim recollection of having once seen a weaver carrying a bag on his back. In dealing with the religious fraternity in Lantern Yard, she was once more completely at home. The scenes at Squire Cass's Christmas-party, and at the village alehouse, are as good as any she has drawn; the central incident of the robbery of Marner's gold, and the substitution thereupon of a human for a sordid interest in his life, is new and striking; and Nancy Lam-meter is a very pleasant and original heroine. Short as it is, it is probably counted among her best pieces of work.

In her next picture of English life there was an important change of plan. Hitherto, while making use of her own observations and experience, she had cast her tales in a time just before her own childhood. She derived much of her material from what her father told her about his early life. "The time of my father's youth," she says, "never seemed prosaic, for it came to my imagination first through his memories, which made a wondrous perspective to my little daily world of discovery." It was by setting her subject at a certain distance that she saw it at the right focus. "My mind," she says again, "works with most freedom, and the keenest sense of poetry, in my remotest past, and there are many strata to be worked through before I can begin to use, artistically, any material I can gather in the present." She now thought the time had come for adventuring into a later period, and 'Felix Holt' is of the time of the Reform Bill of 1832, when the world was waking up, and bid-

ding a long farewell to leisure and repose. It cannot be doubted that the earlier epoch best suited her cast of thought. The mellow atmosphere that bathed her pictures of bygone years, faded, with the change of period, into the light of common day. Felix himself is not very distinct; Jermyan is unpleasant throughout, which is a different thing from being bad—a fact not sufficiently accepted by novelists. A minister, who like Rufus Lyon, habitually pitches his discourse in the "peradventure" key, becomes more than ever an anachronism in the later epoch. For these and other reasons, we do not imagine that this novel is now placed among her best; but it was received at the time with no less applause than its predecessors, and its many striking points found eager appreciation.

Of a very ambitious nature—ambitious, that is to say, of the attainment of various excellence and of the praise due to it—she was now impelled to an altogether different enterprise in letters. Another novel, however successful, could scarcely add to her fame,—but what if she could achieve a great poem! She had sound reasons for thinking she could maintain a high pitch in poetry. Her prose had the condensity, the felicity, the subtle suggestiveness in epithet and phrase, of fine verse. Her works had been filled with thoughts, imagery, and pictures of the true poetic cast. They seemed to want only the accomplishment of verse to be converted from high prose into high poetry. The change of vehicle was in itself, perhaps, a relief after so much toil, and the 'Spanish Gypsy' was accomplished. It was received favourably by the large audience which was accustomed to greet her: nevertheless it was apparent then, and time

has not modified the view, that even when such lofty qualifications as those just enumerated have been put in action, there is still an element, not ascertainable beforehand, which must indispensably form part of the reckoning. That mysterious element—which is as well called inspiration as by any other name—was not found present in the work. It is read with interest, with pleasure, with admiration, but it is not among the poems which the lovers of poetry quote and cherish. It will continue to be of interest, we imagine, not altogether as a poem, but as an exposition of a theory which had for her an extraordinary attraction. When [writing 'The Mill on the Floss,' she said, "My stories grow in me like plants." All the best stories in the world, we imagine, have so grown. But it was natural, as time went on, that the incessant engagement of her mind in problems of life should have led to the evolution of theories, and consequently in her future works, to a new method of construction—namely, that of making the exposition of the theory the basis of the work, and bending character and incident to fit the theory; a change which seems to us to tell of diminished vividness of conception and diminished power of invention. In her notes on the 'Spanish Gypsy,' first published in these volumes, the new process is set forth at large. She had seen a picture which inspired her with an idea:—

"I came home with this in my mind, meaning to give the motive a clothing in some suitable set of historical and local conditions. My reflections brought me nothing that would serve me except that moment in Spanish history when the struggle with the Moors was attaining its climax, and when there was the gypsy

race present under such conditions as would enable me to get my heroine and the hereditary claim on her among the gypsies. I required the opposition of race to give the need for renouncing the expectation of marriage. I could not use the Jews or the Moors, because the facts of their history were too conspicuously opposed to the working out of my catastrophe. Meanwhile the subject had become more and more pregnant to me. I saw it might be taken as a symbol of the part which is played in the general human lot by hereditary conditions in the largest sense, and of the fact that what we call duty is entirely made up of such conditions; for even in cases of just antagonism to the narrow view of hereditary claims, the whole background of the particular struggle is made up of our inherited nature. Suppose for a moment that our conduct at great epochs was determined entirely by reflection, without the immediate intervention of feeling which supersedes reflection, our determination as to the right would consist in an adjustment of our individual needs to the dire necessities of our lot, partly as to our natural constitution, partly as sharers of life with our fellow-beings. Tragedy consists in the terrible difficulty of this adjustment—

‘The dire strife
Of poor Humanity’s afflicted will,
Struggling in vain with ruthless
destiny.’

Looking at individual lots, I seemed to see in each the same story, wrought out with more or less of tragedy, and I determined the elements of my drama under the influence of these ideas.

"The consolatory elements in 'The Spanish Gypsy' are derived from two convictions or sentiments which so conspicuously pervade it, that they may be said to be its very warp on which the whole action is woven. These are,—(1) The importance of individual deeds; (2) The all-sufficiency of the soul's passions in determining sympathetic action.

"In *Silva* is presented the claim of fidelity to social pledges; in *Fedalma*, the claim constituted by an hereditary lot less consciously shared."

The reader cannot fail to see what a difference there is between a scheme of this kind, and that pursued in the early novels. In this later method the story must partake largely of allegory, and will consequently infallibly lose value as a picture of life. The Spanish Gypsy is a metaphysical and ethnological problem in action. In all the later novels the plan is more or less founded on theory. The hero in 'Felix Holt,' Dorothea and Casaubon and Lydgate, Deronda and Mordecai are so many problems dramatised, and the characters express themselves less, and are described and discussed more, even voluminously.

Nevertheless a common spirit animates all her books, though it does not continue to manifest itself in the same form. At the root of George Eliot's genius lay an extraordinarily deep and ever-present sense of the significance of human existence. Her relations with the world in which she found herself, both with its past and its present, pressed so incessantly and so forcibly on the springs of interest and curiosity that there seems to have been hardly a moment when she was not observing, speculating or analysing, and recording the results. The world within and the world without never ceased to be, for her, wonder-lands. Other famous writers, notably Carlyle, have made the significance of life their theme. But by him it was treated in a sardonic spirit, as if mocking at the pettiness and failure of most of the actors who have figured in a drama so momentous. In her case, sympathy with the actors was not less intense than wonder at the drama. It is difficult to say what there is in life, not obviously vile or futile, which did not keenly interest her, and she

was thus led into a range of inquiry far beyond that of the ordinary learned woman. It appears to us that her interest in the race was deeper than in the individual; that she was more strongly attracted by varieties of life in the abstract than by persons—unless, indeed, by such as, embodying some epoch or crisis of thought or of action, conveniently presented to her a problem in the concrete. Art in all its modes of representing nature—philosophy in all its investigations of the internal and external worlds—were the familiar fields of her mental exercises. All this, however, would merely have made her a marvel of information but for the development of the constructive faculty—the power, so suddenly evinced that it may be said to have surprised herself, of arranging her stores and forming with them mental pictures. Happily for the manifestation of her genius, to all this was added an extraordinary aptitude of expression. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of her literary faculty is her power of seeing and stating brief problems of life, and so conveying in a sentence the result of a process of observation and thought. In her earlier works these were eminently happy, and so plain in their pithiness as to contribute greatly to her popularity. But in her later period her style lost much of this lightness; the presentation of the idea (possibly in itself less weighty and less clear) was so laden with accumulations in the effort after completeness and fulness, that the mind, no longer taking it in pleasantly and at once, had to deal with it like a proposition of Euclid. The habit, too, of using phrases and illustrations borrowed from science grew on her, and did not always

tend to lucidity : thus, in the first sentence of 'Deronda' we find a glance mentioned as of a "dynamic quality"—an expression of which we (though not destitute of some tincture of dynamical instruction) have failed to this day to see the applicability. It is observable, too, that the human interest of her tales diminished, and latterly those readers were best pleased who enjoyed tasting the philosophy of the author more than following the story. But, like all great writers, she created her own public, and held it in firm allegiance to the end. We have heard a very experienced judge of literature affirm 'Middlemarch' to be not merely *her* greatest, but *the* greatest novel.

"No former book of mine," she says, "has been received with more enthusiasm, not even 'Adam Bede.' . . . People seem so bent on giving supremacy to 'Middlemarch' that they are sure not to like any future book so well."

Jews and Jewesses, even rabbis and professors, expressed their admiration and gratitude for 'Deronda,' and we imagine that it met with Gentile appreciators no less ardent. "The success of the work at present," writes the author, "is greater than that of 'Middlemarch' up to the corresponding point of publication."

Her intense absorbing interest in human life was also the basis of the creed which, in default of other, George Eliot adopted. We have seen how she cast off her early and earnest belief : nothing which concerns her can be more interesting to the admirers of her works than to know what substitute she found for it, for her new opinions imbue all her writings, and form a necessary key to them. We will therefore endeavour to give some account of them.

It does not appear that philosophy had any share in inspiring the doubts which led her to abandon her former persuasions ; but she must have acquired, immediately afterwards, fresh grounds for confidence in her new opinions from the friends with whom she was most intimately associated in London, and who had arrived at their conclusions from a direction entirely different. Their conclusions required them to accept nothing as fit to form part of a system, either of philosophy or religion, which is not based on fact and capable of being made apparent to the reason. They asserted, not that all else was non-existent, but that it was unknowable, and outside the region of inquiry or theory. Consequently they practically assumed this world as the be-all and the end-all of human existence. In its conditions, as interpreted by science, they found the beginnings, and traced the development, of man as we see him, and declined to consider any possibilities before or after as other than unscientific fancies. For them spirit, with its light of conscience, are evolutions, produced in immeasurably long process by the conditions of the material world, and the action and reaction on each other of the minds of its inhabitants. They find obvious the inference that the spirit thus earth-born will of necessity share the dissolution of the body—dust it is, and unto dust shall it return. Without denying the existence of an unknown cause, they do deny that the conception of it can be a proper basis of a practical religion. For them a deity has, in all ages, and with all peoples, been an invention of man's mind, stimulated by man's hopes and fears—as the Brocken Spectre is the immensely exaggerated shadow, cast on a cloud, of the spectator's own figure.

Thus, after rejecting the familiar belief that God created man, these philosophers are conducted to the very opposite conclusion that man created God. In the presence of this faith, not only revelation and miracle, but a great number of beliefs which were universal, and existed apart from the religious systems of which they formed the basis, are swept away,—the belief in a personal deity to whom man is responsible, that the conscience is a spark of divinity, that a future life will repair the inequalities of this, and that the soul's portion in it will be in accordance with its deserts while on earth. In these negations some of these freethinkers rested, pushing their inquiries in science only. But to others there appeared much risk in depriving the human race, even as it is known to philosophers, of all those powerfully inspiring and powerfully controlling influences which religion has supplied; they perceived also that any system dealing with humanity must admit a tendency to religious belief as an element in the constitution of man. In the writings of Comte these speculators found what they wanted. Closely associated with his views in science and polity was set forth the doctrine of a "religion of humanity," the whole forming what is known as the Positive philosophy. When this life is all, its value is increased infinitely. As all qualities ascribed to unseen powers worshipped by man have been emanations from humanity itself, so humanity itself is a fit object of worship. By fostering all that is best in it, by steadily inculcating that the elevation of the race is a duty to which every individual may be trained, a millennium is to be finally reached in which this world is to be the scene of light and harmony. For Comte's writ-

ings George Eliot had deep admiration and sympathy, and warmly acknowledged her great debt to him. Without being a declared adherent of his philosophy or religion, she explicitly avows her gratitude for the illumination he had contributed to her life. Dr Congreve, the chief evangelist of the religion of humanity in this country, was her intimate friend, and his wife her constant correspondent. Dr Congreve described the 'Spanish Gypsy' as a "mass of Positivism." With this preamble we will present to the reader (who must not expect anything very explicit) some passages from her letters and works which seem to have most relation to the subject:—

"My books have for their main bearing a conclusion without which I could not have cared to write any representation of human life—namely, that the fellowship between man and man which has been the principle of development, social and moral, is not dependent on conceptions of what is not man; and that the idea of God, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the idea of a goodness entirely human (*i.e.*, an exaltation of the human)."

"Love, pity, constituting sympathy, and generous joy with regard to the lot of our fellow-men comes in—has been growing since the beginning—enormously enhanced by wider vision of results—by an imagination actively interested in the lot of mankind generally; and these feelings become piety—*i.e.*, loving, willing submission, and heroic Promethean effort, towards high possibilities, which may result from our individual life.

"There is really no moral 'sanction' but this inward impulse. The will of God is the same thing as the will of other men, compelling us to work and avoid what they have seen to be harmful to social existence. Disjoined from any perceived good, the divine will is simply so much as we have ascertained of the facts of existence which compel obedience at our peril. Any

other notion comes from the supposition of arbitrary revelation."

This is the motto to one of her short tales:—

"Give me no light, great heaven, but
such as turns
To energy of human fellowship;
No powers save the growing heritage
That makes completer manhood."

"The progress of the world can certainly never come at all save by the modified action of the individual beings who compose the world, and that we can say to ourselves with effect, 'There is an order of considerations which I will keep myself continually in mind of, so that they may continually be the prompters of certain feelings and actions,' seems to me as undeniable as that we can resolve to study the Semitic languages and apply to an oriental scholar to give us daily lessons."

"In her general attitude towards life," says her biographer, "George Eliot was neither optimist nor pessimist. She held to the middle term which she invented for herself of 'meliorist.' She was cheered by the hope and by the belief in gradual improvement of the mass; for in her view each individual must find the better part of happiness in helping another."

"Will you believe," she writes, "that an accomplished man some years ago said to me, that he saw no place for the exercise of *resignation*, when there was no personal divine will contemplated as ordaining sorrow or privation? He is not yet aware that he is getting old, and needing that unim-bittered compliance of soul with the inevitable, which seems to me a full enough meaning for the word '*resignation*.'"

"I fear," she writes to Mrs Bray, "the fatal fact about your story is the absence of God and hell. 'My dear madam, you have not presented motives to the children!' It is really hideous to find that those who sit in the scribes' seats have got no further than the appeal to selfishness, which they call God."

She is fond of affirming that

high effort, though it fail, is not failure:—

"My impression of the good there is in all unselfish efforts is continually strengthened. Doubtless many a ship is drowned on expeditions of discovery or rescue, and precious freights lie buried. But there was the good of manning and furnishing the ship with a great purpose before it set out."

On the death of Mazzini she writes:—

"Such a man leaves behind him a wider good than the loss of his personal presence can take away."

"The greatest gift the hero leaves his race,
Is to have been a hero."

"I must be excused for quoting my own words, because they are my *credo*."

Of her life with Lewes she writes:—

"Our unspeakable joy in each other has no other alloy than the sense that it must one day end in parting."

"The approach of parting is the bitterness of age."

"The realm of silence is large enough beyond the grave. This is the world of light and speech."

"I desire," she writes in her journal, "no added blessing for the coming year but this,—that I may do some good lasting work, and make both my outward and inward habits less imperfect—that is, more directly tending to the best uses of life."

To a friend she writes:—

"For nearly a year death seems to me my most intimate daily companion. I mingle the thought of it with every other, not sadly, but as one mingles the thought of some one who is nearest in love and duty with all one's motives. I try to delight in the sunshine that will be when I shall never see it any more. And I think it is possible for this sort of impersonal life to attain great intensity,—possible for us to gain much more independence, than is usually believed, of the small bundle of facts that make our own personality."

This last sentiment has been expanded in the best known of her verses, which have been adopted; we believe, as a Positivist hymn, because they express so well the belief of the sect in all that man can call his future. They have been too often quoted to be introduced here. They admit of the construction that the dead are immortal only in the sense that their good deeds and example have entered into many lives, inspiring fresh endeavours for the exaltation of humanity, and that thus they may be said to have a continued life on earth. "So to live is heaven;" "This is life to come"—are the conclusions announced in the hymn. Her poems are more explicit on the subject of her religious philosophy, and convey it in a clearer and more compact fashion, than her prose writings. We have seen the 'Spanish Gypsy' recognized as a mass of Positivism; the 'Legend of Jubal' is no less so, being entirely founded on, and illustrative of, the doctrine that man's future life is in his works. "Stradivarius" repeats the theme; and "A Minor Prophet," the dream of the scientific man, of the material world of the future as modified by science, is only the foil to her own dream of the moral world of the future as modified by the religion of humanity.

All this, vague enough as a profession of faith, is in unison, so far as it goes, with the principles of Positivism. We do not know that anything of importance will at any time be added to the foregoing evidence of what George Eliot had adopted as her creed. It is very evident that the religion thus constituted is only the projected image of her own spirit. Her intense enjoyment of life, her curiosity and interest in all that concerns the race, her natural good-

ness, her freedom from common temptations, rendered easy for her the adoption of the doctrine that we should shape our lives for the benefit of humanity at large. She would have done this—at any rate she would have done as she did—without consciously holding any such creed. She would have talked Positivism as Monsieur Jourdain talked prose. Had she never heard of Comte or Dr Congreve, she would have been a disciple of the religion of humanity. Its shaping effect was not on her nature, but on her works. When it had assumed for her an organised and external form, she became its apostle. In place of representing life as she observed it, she represented it with reference to the religion of humanity. In place of depicting people as she found them, she depicted them as shaped or controlled by a theoretical influence. Whether we think this an advantage may be gathered from preceding passages in this paper.

It is to be noted that George Eliot is in unison with the Positivists up to a certain point only. While they have, for the manifestation of their religion, a sort of liturgy and a church, there is no evidence that she ever considered humanity to be a proper object of worship. With this exception, they would probably consider her creed to be in accord with theirs. It may, as in her case, and doubtless in many others, be a possible rule of life for individual natures. But it must also be judged as a means for its professed end, of effecting, through general acceptance, the exaltation of humanity. For this it demands that every member shall, in the way for which his abilities best suit him, labour for the good of the race, sinking his own private interests in those

of humanity. For reward, he must derive what satisfaction he can from the sense that his efforts in this direction have not been unavailing. So pure and disinterested is this faith, so sublimated from all motives other than the highest, that, judged by it, the desire to do right from the hope of attaining heaven or avoiding hell is mere selfishness. Such a religion is evidently suited only to saints and Positivists. It appeals to nothing which actuates the multitude. It demands a sacrifice of self which only a few recorded characters have been found capable of. It requires us to put all we possess into a sinking fund for the benefit of nobody knows whom. It wants the powerful element of hope, for its promises are limited to the hazy expectation of an indefinitely distant possibility, less than the shadow of a shade. George Eliot, with a view to adapting the doctrine to common use, would confine the endeavours of ordinary natures to the task of furthering the happiness and advantage of those immediately around them. But we think the youth of this country have long been familiar with so much Positivism as that, in the Church Catechism. In common with the Positivists she had, we learn, "great hope for the future in the improvement of human nature by the gradual development of the affections and the sympathetic emotions,"—though what she found in the past to give reason for such expectation, we do not learn. The high and exclusive devotion to humanity on which the religion is based can only be a rule of life to a few who, in its absence, would have conformed to its precepts. As a means for effecting the ambitious design of influencing and modify-

ing the race, its demands on human nature are impossible to be satisfied, its allurements cold and dim: it might have been conceived in the moon, and for the inhabitants of the moon; it is such stuff as dreams are made of.

Now that this famous woman has quitted the scene, the world would gladly know somewhat of her life as apart from her works. These three volumes contain her biography, chiefly as recorded by herself in journals and letters to intimate friends, the links being supplied sparingly and judiciously by Mr Cross, whose one thought in the matter has evidently been how best to let her speak for herself. "In authorship," she says, "I hold carelessness to be a mortal sin;" and this rule she extended no less stringently to her correspondence. The plan on which the letters and journals have been sifted, and formed into what closely resembles an autobiography, is novel, and says much for the originality and skill of the biographer. In these records the reader will follow her steps in life from childhood, will learn what were the influences that moulded her character, the history of her literary career and of her domestic life, the impressions derived from foreign travel, what she thought of eminent contemporaries, and what manner of people were her chosen friends. He will enjoy, for the most part, the immense advantage of finding all these interesting matters chronicled by herself; and such additions as Mr Cross has made, while indispensable to completeness, are as valuable as they are unobtrusive. The many devoted students of her works will receive a new pleasure in reading them again along with the present biography, which sheds on them quite an illumination, and

will, we should think, be regarded as their indispensable companion on the book-shelf.

Her later life was in one respect very singular. Lewes's care for her was so alert and prospective, that she may be said to have dwelt like some princess in a fairy tale, guarded by spells against annoyance. He conducted all business, even answered all letters for her to other than her intimate friends. He sifted the reviews of her works, that she might be hurt by no censure; he even warned correspondents against using too much freedom in criticism. His habits made him her constant companion—no small fret could elude his vigilance, and his chief happiness lay in ministering to her comfort. The modest mansion in St John's Wood was as quiet and secluded as if it stood on the outskirts of a village. Here her hours of work and study were absolutely sacred. On Sunday afternoons she was at home to visitors, and there were few of her eminent contemporaries who did not at one time or other come to offer her genuine homage. While enjoying the best of social intercourse at will, she held herself free from its exactions, the labours in which the public were so deeply interested forming ample ground for the exemption. When in need of fresher air, she and Lewes repaired to their country house, situated in a part of Surrey chosen for its agreeable qualities, and where many valued friends lived within a drive. Tennyson was one of these, and any records that may have been preserved of their meetings and their "wit-combats" will seem gold-lettered to posterity as it looks back on the Victorian age. Such a life is evi-

dently what many sigh for but few attain. Indeed, had she been less sensitive, and her health less frail in later life, we should say she was altogether too sedulously sheltered from care. This was not the kind of life in which she received and stored up her early and fresh impressions. The artist who would describe his own time must keep touch with it, must receive its form and pressure, not in the study, but by actual contact with his fellows, by mingling in their affairs, by being penetrated with their hopes and fears, by knowing disappointment as well as success, by facing the difficulties no less than by enjoying the pleasures of life. But it is possible that, in the actual circumstances, devotion and encouragement, ease and leisure, were the necessary conditions for doing her work after the flush and buoyancy of youth were past. However this may be, it is certain that she was surrounded in a remarkable degree by all that can lend warmth and sunshine to the advance of life. The most anxious affection did not cease for long to surround her when she lost Lewes. Her marriage to the present biographer gave the most complete and secure promise of a serene evening. He had long been an intimate and dear friend, and, on the death of Lewes, had been prompt to afford such active sympathy as only a very uncommon devotion could inspire. Her correspondence after her marriage testifies how unceasing was his care for her, how acute and grateful her sense of it. But the union was of very short duration; she died within the twelvemonth, leaving only the consolation that her sixty-one years had been bright and happy to the close.

THE NILE EXPEDITION :

FROM GEMAI TO KORTI IN A WHALER.

"Put your helm down," cried the *quasi* nautical military captain,—"hard down." Obedient Atkins, with becoming promptitude, *unshipped the tiller*, and flinging it in the bottom of his boat, awaited orders.

The incident may briefly convey to the reader the average amount of boat-lore with which the leading companies of Lord Wolseley's first whaler-embarked battalion touched the waters of the Nile at Gemai, and may be an excuse for offering the following details of the river-march from thence to Korti.

When the boat is the practical unit, and one boat as like another as the number of firms employed could make them, it will perhaps suffice to describe the heroine of the present chronicle, and let No. 44 stand for one and all. Of the ordinary whaler shape—pointed stem and stern, carrying two masts and rather-inadequate lugsails—No. 44 has a length of 32 feet 3½ inches, a beam of 6 feet 11½ inches, and a draught of 2½ feet.

On starting from Gemai the boat was equipped in accordance with the subjoined list,¹ showing her to be well found : but the oars were ill balanced, and too long for the double-banked rowing to which, when the stores were taken in, it was found necessary to resort ; the rudder was too small and too weak (it split in my hands at Semneh) ; and the stem, too fine for the strain imposed upon it in hauling through the cataracts, gaped ominously in the rush at Ambigol. The keel might well have been dis-

pensed with, and a flat double-bottom substituted, the boat being frequently held among the rocks by the keel alone.

According to the strength of companies, the boats' crews varied in number, running nine to eleven (in no case exceeding twelve) men per boat—this including the Canadian voyageurs, of whom one (in the case of the captain, two) was told off to each as far as Dal: south of Dal, and to Abou Fatmeh, one voyageur was considered sufficient for a company, and had his place assigned him in the leading boat ; while for the remaining distance, the boats proceeded in charge of troop-crews alone.

Up a falling Nile, the progress of light and of laden boats affords no parallel ; yet the difference between the time taken by Colonel Alleyne in his trip to Dal with boats manned by voyageurs, and that taken by our boats troop-manned, is so marked as to invite notice.

The Nile perpetually changes ; the channel useful to-day may to-morrow be useless : there is no *light* in the water. To this, as much as to their greater weight and less practised handling, is due the apparently disproportionate difference in the time taken by the experimental party and by the troops who followed them. It should be mentioned, also, that the course of these boats has been in a great measure guess-work : a whole company occasionally following its leader on the wrong road, has lost five or six hours. One reliable native guide per company would have been invaluable.

¹ See *post*, pp. 183, 184.

DIARY.

5th Nov. 1884.—9:45 A.M. Half battalion sailed from Gemai; four companies in order of the alphabet. Thirty-one boats, all told, rationed for the day. One hundred days' stores to be shipped at Sarras.

A fair fallacious wind and flying start: some very pretty, some very clumsy sailing, resolving itself here into a race, there into a collision: boats must learn to keep their distance. Channel unimpeded; reached Sarras, seventeen miles, by 4 P.M. Men were much pleased with themselves. Work of taking in stores at once commenced.

6th Nov.—Shipment of stores continued. Capacity of our 30-foot boats taxed, and the intended hundred days' reduced to eighty days' ration per man: these stores not to be touched till after Dongola is reached, the Commissariat being prepared to supply at various intermediate points. At Sarras eight days' ration per man drawn from this source. Boats look very low in the water: sailed 4 P.M., and with a fair slant of wind, made three miles up-stream before dark.

7th Nov.—Quitted our moorings 7 A.M., in the original order, but with expedient intervals of a quarter of an hour between companies. A hard day; by sundown five miles accomplished. Struck my first rock while tracking to-day, and in heaving boat off got left there for an hour *solus*. Men's ardour a little damped. At sundown, No. 44, and two boats of another company, on the wrong side of the river, and at foot of Semneh cataract. Made crew comfortable under the boat-tent, and slept.

8th Nov.—All day in Semneh cataract. Strong rush of water throughout; but the upper gate offers the only serious obstacle.

Here boats unloaded for portage of stores, and navigation conducted by the naval people and by natives, who brought each boat through with speed and skill. Not caring to pitch tents, men slept on the ground by their loads.

9th Nov.—Half battalion separated. The two leading companies got off last evening, remainder following this morning. Double companies the best working unit; can keep within hail, and be of mutual assistance. Made eight miles this day. Encamped east bank at sundown; company separated again. A good deal of rough tracking.

10th Nov.—Reached the foot of Ambigol cataract at sundown, and camped in hearing of its rushing water—a low perpetual roar, but the noise has been overrated by travellers. My absent boats of last night did not arrive till 9:30 A.M. this day, which has been a fairly prosperous one, the men rowing better together, and accomplishing some fine bits of tracking: pulled off their legs in one place, but all held on to the satisfaction of the two occupants of the boat. At 4 P.M. reached this desolate spot, and halted for remainder of the company: little or no vegetation even at river-bank, but black iron rocks and sand. Navigation intricate, and want of a chart much felt. Only three of my seven boats reached the rendezvous.

12th Nov.—Ambigol is four miles behind us. One of my non-commissioned officers narrowly escaped drowning; fell overboard in mid-stream, but was caught by the man at stroke,—accident occurred poling. At nightfall yesterday had only cleared the lower gate, and that with holes in my own and another boat; both were re-

paired this morning. Resumed march 7 A.M., and made good progress towards the upper gate; tracking difficult, but the two companies worked well together, and all were through by night-fall, though not without some ugly bumps. Drew six days' rations from the Commissariat depot here.

13th Nov.—Morning spent in severe tracking, but about 1 P.M. came upon a good reach, and did an hour's sailing, enabling the men to eat their mid-day biscuit in the boats. Sighted the island of Mak-anassa, and tracked again. No. 46 knocked a hole in her bottom,—an unlucky boat. To-morrow should see us at Tangour.

14th Nov.—With a fine fair breeze ran the remaining distance to Tangour in the forenoon, and came up with the two leading companies of the half battalion. Must wait till they are out of the way. During this halt, I walked to the remains of the steamer Ghizeh, the larger of two which the naval people took up-stream; found her in a bay of the east bank, lying on her starboard side at the foot of the black rocks—a total wreck.

16th Nov.—Head of Tangour cataract, and well over a nasty piece of water. The stream here runs furiously for a quarter of a mile, but the haul is straight: men distributed along its length, passed the boats up—only lightened of arms, ammunition, and accoutrements—in rapid succession. One boat capsized through a slack rope, but lost little: her two occupants, Canadians, scrambled with much dexterity on to the keel. Another boat, promptly manned, put off and succeeded in bringing to the first in a backwater, righting and returning with her to her station; but it was then too late for further

operations, and the work was only to-day completed.

18th Nov.—A bad start yesterday morning: little or no wind; progress slow and laborious, with frequent bits of hard tracking. At starting rumour reached us of the death of General Gordon, and its effect upon the men was apparent and immediate.

Camped as usual at sundown. A few natives came up with dates for sale and goats' milk, but the country here evidently produces little of any kind. Difficult to estimate distance traversed.

Off this morning with a light wind. One of my Canadians sick, henceforward a passenger. Stuck at a rapid with four other boats, and encamped at sundown. Country fierce, desolate, and bare. Many of the men suffer from sores on the hands, which the flies and sand aggravate.

19th Nov.—Camp Kalut, south of Akasheh rapid, which we reached at noon this day. Channel narrow, and rush of water strong; all but one boat through uninjured. Took in three days' rations from the Commissariat depot, and proceeded over a fine reach of smooth water, terminating in an abrupt bend to the southward, when the shores assume their present stern and bold aspect. Our tents are in a palm-grove, and the boats in a snug backwater below.

20th Nov.—Off at sunrise with sail and oar. Long fine reaches, banks strong and precipitous. At 11 A.M. came up with the preceding company entering the Dal cataract—the Devil's own. The two companies now worked together, and by dusk had made fair progress up the east bank; the western channel found impassable at this season.

21st Nov.—Fell in at 7 A.M., and during the day successfully passed

the two worst rushes in the cataract. While being hauled through the first of these my towing-line parted, the boat's head paid off, and away we went. Brought to some distance down-stream, and at the second attempt got safely through. Dal is a most difficult cataract, but fair water is promised beyond.

22d Nov.—Still within the cataract—our third day ; three intricate bits of tracking have detained us. Clear to-morrow.

23d Nov.—Reached Sacramatto (head of Dal) 10 A.M. to-day, and drew a further supply of fifteen days' rations. Exchanged boat 46 for No. 1, left here by Colonel Alleyne's party, and repaired my own boat, gaping badly at the stem. Only one voyageur per company is to go on : for my own I have secured an excellent man, Salomon Bijou. Under way again 3.30 P.M., with a fine breeze and open water. Each company now ordered to take its own course independently, and make all speed to Dongola. Camped for the night on a pretty green island about five miles south of Dal. Company in front have just lost a man overboard—poor Cornwell.

24th Nov.—A disappointing day. Left island early, and coming up with the company to which the drowned man belonged, was a member of the board on his effects. Wind very light, current strong, water shoal. Breeze sprang up at mid-day, and some sailing was done for about a mile, when stopped by shoal and difficult water. Tracked, and pitched camp at sundown. West bank all day ; try east to-morrow.

25th Nov.—Another windless morning ; heavy rowing with shoal water. After noon a breeze sprang up, and we sailed till 3 P.M., when one of the boats got fast on a rock :

had to be lightened, and helped home.

26th Nov.—Under way 7 A.M. No wind, and some hard water in the Amara rapid at starting. 1.30 P.M. a light air ; made Sakyst-el-Abd 4 P.M. ; fine open reaches, and more cultivation on the banks. Made Say Island at sundown, and encamped among the palms. Natives say seven days to Dongola. Capital dates vary our "bully" beef and biscuit.

27th Nov., Say Island, Camp 2d. —A quiet and moonlit night after a hot toilsome day ; one boat absent from my moorings. Breeze died with the dawn ; out tracking-lines till mid-day, when fair wind and good sailing for an hour ; then still again, and more tracking—heavy work and shoal water. Crossed to the island shore again at sundown, and encamped. Made about seven miles during the day. Sun very powerful, and the glare on water rather trying to the eyes.

The country has lost much of its sternness since leaving Dal ; and natives with milk, dates, and more rarely eggs, assemble at our halts. To the black iron cliffs and boulders have succeeded mud-banks and palms : many seem worthy a painter. Pair of cotton gloves a good possession ; flies settle, and persecute to sores the slightest scratch, and most of us suffer from bad hands in consequence.

29th Nov.—During the two past days I estimate our progress at twenty-six miles. A fine fair breeze throughout this morning, with goose-winged sails, enabled us to make good way, till, at a sudden bend to the eastward, near Soleb, this afternoon, the wind headed us, and our progress resumed its normal pace. Sundown found us encamped on the west bank.

30th Nov.—Under way, with a

fair breeze. At 11 A.M. reached Absaret, where are stationed a detachment of the Egyptian army, and a Commissariat depot established. Carried the wind with us for the first time throughout the day, and should make Kaibar tomorrow.

1st Dec.—Reached the rapid at mid-day, and were all through it by nightfall: a nasty shoal piece of water, but otherwise of no great difficulty to the whalers. Moon so bright to-night as to admit of a sketch being made of the place.

2d Dec.—Detained at Kaibar till 8 A.M. assisting a lame duck dropped by one of the preceding companies. Met Colonel Butler returning from Hannek, with pressing orders to lose no time. Little or no wind again after early morning; the banks too steep for tracking. Rowed all day; men somewhat fatigued. 4 P.M. sighted a crocodile, an object more rare here than I had supposed.

3d Dec.—Off at 7.15 A.M.; wind light and shifty. Rowed through two heavy bits of water. Halted 12.30 to 1 P.M. to rest the men and have dinner. No wind throughout the afternoon; much sunken rock. Stream sinuous; air hot. Reached Shaban rapid (true foot of Hannek cataract) at 3 P.M., and by sundown had accomplished a portion of its passage. Narrowly escaped accident through the tracking-line of our boat breaking in the current, from which, as she drifted down, the two men in her were unable to disengage the boat: her rescue was effected only just above the gate by boat 55, which, with her captain, Bijou, and a scratch crew, put off at once.

4th Dec.—A wasted day. By the misdirection of natives, the company took a wrong channel, which led just at sundown to a

cul de sac, in the attempt to pass which No. 44 got a hole knocked in her, was badly strained, and must be repaired before to-morrow's retrograde.

5th Dec.—Began the day by retracing our steps, and now are still within the rapid, encamped near Tagab, on the island of Semite. Bijou sick through sun and over-exertion. A hard day of tracking and rowing; no wind. Made about five miles.

6th Dec.—At 9 A.M. to-day reached Hannek proper, an intricate-looking place. Found four Canadians here left as pilots; shipped them accordingly. Their experience of this ever-changing river of little use. No. 44 took to the sand within the first quarter of an hour. Got natives on board, one to each boat, and succeeded, under their guidance, in reaching the head of the cataract by dusk, when No. 44 struck a sunken rock in mid-stream, remaining fast at an angle of 45°. The native waited not for *backsheesh*, but dived overboard; and we have a somewhat uncomfortable night before us.

7th Dec.—Efforts at extrication recommenced at dawn, and by 8 A.M. we were at the bank, our towing-line having been carried ashore by a friend; boat leaking, but otherwise little the worse for her straining. Breakfasted ashore, and at 11 A.M. arrived at Abou Fatmeh, where H.M.S. Nasifu-l-Khair (consort of the late lamented Ghizel) was waiting to give us a tow to Dongola. The heavier stores were removed from the boats to the steamer, fourteen days' rations taken from the Commissariat depot, and at 2 P.M. the voyage was resumed under truly auspicious circumstances.

8th Dec., 5 P.M.—New Dongola reached, and our camp pitched

opposite to avoid smallpox infection.

The river has much widened, and with current less strong, all we want is a fair wind to make good the long southerly run to Debbeh.

9th Dec.—Morning orders signalled across, "Proceed at once to Debbeh." Nasifu-l-Khair gone for fuel; boats got under way independently, and off before a fine breeze, freshening to strong, of which their lightened condition enabled us to take full advantage. By sundown we had made twenty-three miles without touching an oar, and encamped on a sandy island, memorable only as owning a pond and many wild duck which laughed at revolvers.

10th Dec.—Off at sunrise, the steamer in company, and not always with the best of the race. By noon, before a grand breeze, we had made Handak, and by night-fall had added another twenty-five miles to the distance from Dongola. Found good camping-ground on the east bank.

11th Dec.—Sailed 6.30 A.M. before the same good wind, and with fine reaches of water. By mid-day the boats had reached Old Dongola, situated on a curious promontory of red rock jutting from the east bank. The stream here runs fast. Made no halt. During the latter part of this day our course much impeded by sand-banks. No. 44 three times aground, and glad of a lift from the steamer at last to her moorings, within seven miles of Debbeh.

12th Dec., Debbeh.—Arrived 11 A.M., and found the two preceding companies under orders for Korti (some forty miles further upstream)—applying also to us as soon as our stores are checked, and the board on damaged provisions held. Got some good bread and fresh

meat from the Commissariat, also a supply of *piastres*, the want of which in small dealings with natives has been much felt.

13th Dec., Debbeh.—Remained encamped for the day. Stores checked. Cabin-biscuits have not stood well—many cases of them bad through wetting. In the afternoon I visited the field of the Mudir's July battle, traces of which were apparent.

14th Dec.—Drew fresh bread-ration, and sailed for Korti. From Debbeh dates the long easterly bend of the Nile, with consequent head-wind; and something of our original rate of progress is resumed. By sundown about twelve miles made good; camp on the right bank.

15th Dec.—No wind till 9 A.M., when a strong breeze sprang up suddenly; boats close-hauled, but mostly sailing well for two hours. Headed by the wind at noon; tracked, rowed, and tracked again against a strong stream, and by sundown had covered another twelve miles.

16th Dec.—Foul wind again; water very shoal approaching the island of Tani. At noon met the naval picket-boat, and learned that Korti was only eight miles ahead of us; yet sunset found us still short of the place. Just before making fast for the night, Lord Wolseley's *dahabeeyeh*, in tow of the Mudir's small steamer, came up with and passed us.

17th Dec., Korti.—The halt of last night left us only two miles from our destination, but almost at starting we found the boats involved in a very labyrinth of sand-banks, through or round which channels must be found. It was 11 A.M. before the first boat got in, and one o'clock when the last of our flotilla made fast under the steep bank and pleasant shade of Korti.

LIST OF SUPPLIES TO BE SENT IN EACH BOAT PROCEEDING UP THE NILE,
CALCULATED FOR 12 MEN IN A BOAT, AND TO LAST 100 DAYS.

Net total for each boat.	Article.	Packed in		Proposed daily issue.*
		No. of cases.	Contents of each.	
799 lb. . .	Preserved corned meat	1 10	60 lb. . . 54 " . .	1 lb. 4 days out of 6.
192 " . .	Preserved fresh meat	4 4	49 11-16 lb. 48 lb. . .	
168 " . .	Bacon †	4	average 42 lb. . .	" "
48 " . .	Boiled mutton †	1	48 " . .	
66 " . .	Cheese	4	2 cheeses, 16½ lb. . .	¾ oz.
770 " . .	Biscuit, navy	22	35 lb. . .	1 lb. 5 days out of 6.
240 " . .	" cabin	8	30 " . .	
200 " . .	Flour	2 2	60 " . . 40 " . .	1 lb. 1. day out of 6.
52 half-pint bottles	Pickles	2	26 bottles . .	
17 tins . .	Jam	1	17 tins . .	1½ oz. 2 days out of 6.
17 " . .	Marmalade		17 " . .	
80 lb. . .	Tea	2	40 lb. . .	1 oz.
240 " . .	Sugar	4 bags	60 " . .	3 oz.
19 " . .	Salt	1 bag	19 " . .	¾ oz.
80 " . .	Preserved vegetables	1 1 3	48 " . . 32 " . . 5 bottles . .	1 oz. 1-320 gallon.
7½ gallons .	Lime-juice	1	4 " . .	
432 rations .	Erbewurst	2	216 rations . .	1 ration every 3d day.
40 lb. . .	Cocoa and milk	1	40 lb. . .	Extra for occa- sional use.
1½ gallons .	Vinegar	1	5 bottles . .	1-1280 gallon.
40 lb. . .	Rice	2	20 lb. . .	¾ oz.
40 " . .	Oatmeal		20 " . .	¾ oz.
10 " . .	Baking powder		5 " . .	
2 " . .	Pepper		1 " . .	1-36 oz.
40 " . .	Tobacco	1	40 " . .	On repayment at 1s. 4d. per lb.
27 " . .	Soap (common)	1	27 " . .	On repayment at ½d. a-piece.
9 " . .	" (carbolic)	1	9 " . .	On repayment at 1d. a-piece.
192 boxes .	Matches	1	192 boxes . .	
	Field-hospital supply- case ‡	1	Sundry. . . .	
		88		

* The column for the daily issues shows the data upon which the supplies of each article have been calculated, but provided the total ration is not exceeded, the various articles may be issued in such proportions as may be considered advisable by the officer commanding.

† If the supply of bacon is sufficient, 5 cases containing about 200 lb. will be sent in each boat. In that event the supply of boiled mutton will be omitted.

‡ Containing—

3 bottles brandy.
3 bottles port wine.
12 4-oz. tins Liebig's extractum
carnis.
½ lb. mustard (in tin).
1 lb. yellow soap (in tin).

1 lb. candles (in tin).
1 tin alum.
2 lb. arrowroot.
¼ lb. salt (in turned box).
4 tins condensed milk.
6 tins cocoa and milk.

2 boxes safety-matches.
¾ lb. compressed tea.
1 corkscrew.
1 opening knife.
1 bottle permanganate.

LIST OF BOAT EQUIPMENT AT GEMAI.

Every boat carries—

2 Masts.	6 Boxes ammunition.	2 Spades.
2 Sails and yards.	2 Axes, felling.	2 Shovels.
12 Oars.	1 Axe, pick.	6 Sacks (with strings).
2 Boat-hooks.	1 Balance, spring, with pan.	1 Sponge.
6 Pushing-poles.	3 Buckets, leather.	6 Slings, webbing.
2 Grapnels, 6 fathoms rope.	3 Canisters, tin.	2 Canvas slings.
12 Rowlocks.	12 Cups, tin.	1 Sheet, lead, 2 ft. by 2 ft.
3 Hardwood rollers.	12 Plates, tin.	4 lb. pitch.
5 Spare planks, besides usual footboards.	1 Dish, baking.	32 lb. paint, in tins.
2 Spare knees.	1 Dredger, pepper.	1 Paint-brush.
1 Awning.	1 Fork, flesh.	4½ yards thick canvas.
2 Awning-poles.	12 Forks.	3½ yards sail-canvas.
1 Rudder and yoke-lines.	12 Knives.	1 Coil spun yarn.
1 Towing-rope, 120 fathoms.	12 Spoons.	1 Filter.
1 Coil of cordage, 50 fathoms.	2 Knives, butchers'.	1 Tin reserve charcoal for do.
1 Snatch-block.	2 Tin-openers.	1 lb. tow.
1 Leading-block.	2 Kettles, camp.	1 Hammer.
1 Bell tent.	1 Ladle, soup.	1 Bag nails.
3 Bags, waterproof, blankets.	1 Lamp, in box.	Corks.
1 Bag, waterproof, accoutrements.	2 Gallons colza oil.	Sand-paper.
	2 Mops.	Hooks and lines, fishing.
	1 Pail, iron.	
	1 Pan, frying.	
	1 Portable stove.	

The list of supplies carried by each boat is given on the preceding page.

One boat in six carries—

1 Coil of cord.	10 lb. pitch.	6 Axe-handles.
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One boat in eight carries—

1 Tool-chest.	7 Palms, sailmakers.	4 lb. iron nails.
1 Adze.	2 Pincers.	4 gross brass screws.
1 Auger.	1 Jack plane.	10 sheets tin.
1 Axe.	1 Punch.	2 lb. marline.
4 Brad-awls.	1 Rule, 2 feet.	1 Marline-spike.
4 Chisels.	1 Saw.	5 lb. twine and sail-thread.
12 Screw-drivers.	1 Scissors.	1½ gallons oil.
2 Files.	1 Saw-set.	25 lb. lead, white.
3 Gimlets.	2 Stones, sharpening.	2 lb. paint, white.
2 Hammers, claw.	1 Tape, measuring.	½ lb. bees'-wax.
1 Hatchet.	2 Brushes, paint.	6 Axe-handles.
3 Knives.	1 Axe, felling.	10 lb. tow.
1 Mallet.	5 Shoes, pushing-poles.	4 bottles oil (tin).
48 Needles.	6 lb. copper nails.	

One boat in twenty carries—

1 Grindstone, complete.	1 Luff tackle.	30 lb. iron nails.
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Fifteen boatmen divide between them—

2 Cans, soup.	2 Kettles, tin.	15 Tin pots.
1 Dredger, tin.	2 Knives, butchers'.	15 Spoons.
15 Forks.	15 Knives.	Spare lines, hooks, and fishing-nets.
1 Fork, flesh.	1 Ladle, soup.	
3 Kettles, camp.	15 Plates.	

TABLE OF APPROXIMATE TIMES AND DISTANCES.

A Company of Seven Boats proceeding up the Nile's November-December stream,

DATE.	PLACES.		MILES.	HOURS	REMARKS.
	From	To			
1884- November 5	Gemai . . .	Sarras . . .	17	6	Good plain sailing. Heavy stream. Semneh cataract only formidable at upper gate, where portage necessary 300 yards. Stream easier, but progress dependent on wind mainly. Navigation rather intricate. Upper gate presents most difficulty owing to the curve.
5 to 7	Sarras . . .	Semneh (foot) .	6	11	
7 " 8	" . . .	" (head) .	1½	10	
8 " 10	Semneh . . .	Ambigol (foot) .	17½	20	
10 " 12	" . . .	" (head) .	4	14	Wind wanted, otherwise tedious tracking. Severe rush of ¼ mile at head of cataract; hauling down west bank.
12 " 14	Ambigol . . .	Tangour (foot) .	13	14	
14 " 16	" . . .	" (head) .	2½	20	
noon 17 " 19	Tangour . . .	Akasheh . . .	8	24	
noon 19 " 20	Akasheh . . .	Dal (foot) . . .	7½	10	At this season Dal presents greater difficulty than any other of the cataracts—very shoal. Channels intricate, with two strong rushes. East bank used.
20 " 23	" . . .	" (head) . . .	5	26	
p.m. 23 " 26 a.m.	Dal . . .	Amara Rapid .	20½	23	Indifferent to bad: water shoal for tracking; wind wanted.
26 p.m. 27 to 30 a.m.	Amara . . .	North Say Island	13	4½	Good water, open reaches. Strong current, little wind, but channel clear.
	North Say Island	Absaret . . .	36	33	
Nov. 30 " Dec. 1	Absaret . . .	Kalbar . . .	29	15	Open reaches, fair sailing. Water fair to Shaban, where Hannek (3) cataract actually begins; from this, severe work; a pilot necessary.
December 2 to 7	Kalbar . . .	Hannek (Abou Fatmeh)	24	50	
7 " 8	Abou Fatmeh .	New Dongola .	40	13½	Fine open water, assisted by steamer Nasifu-l-Khair.
9 " 10 noon	New Dongola .	Handak . . .	45	14	
10 " 11 noon	Handak . . .	Old Dongola .	36	10	Water frequently shoaling, light wind, sand-banks.
11 " 12 a.m.	Old Dongola .	Debbah . . .	20	15	
14 " 17 noon	Debbah . . .	Korti . . .	40	35	Headwind, strong stream, indifferent tracking.
			385½	368	

THE WATERS OF HERCULES.—PART VII.

CHAPTER XXIII.—FISHING.

"Bait the hook well ; this fish will bite."

—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

ABOUT this time a fishing mania took possession of the Hercules valley. One eccentric Englishman had been enough to fire the enthusiasm of several dozen people, who immediately discovered that they had a passion for this watery sport. Everybody fished, and everybody had a different system of fishing, and everybody likewise spoke with withering scorn of every system but his own. The fish in this wild Djernis river were unwary and ignorant ; and with so many systems brought to bear against them, it would go hard, surely, if some hundreds of those finny barbarians were not landed before the week was out.

Dr Kokovics's System.

Dr Kokovics was all for energetic measures ; he usually was for energetic measures, both in public and in private life. He quite deprecated any system which professed only to lure or coax the fish out of their element. He argued, amidst frantic gestures and with much throwing back of his head to clear his eyes from the fringe of hanging locks, that the fish should be got out of the water with as much noise and general rejoicing as could by any possibility be managed. This object was satisfactorily attained by the means of explosive bombs, which being thrown into the river, sent the fish floating, stunned, to the surface. In this way the process was raised to the level of a public entertainment. Seats could be arranged for the ladies by the side of the

river ; torches could be used ; and a band of music, stationed behind the bushes, could fill up the intervals between the bombs with martial or operatic strains—so that in the case of no fish being caught, the public amusement need not suffer on that account. A choice selection of pieces bearing a piscatorial allusion, such as "Vieni la barca e pronta," or "Di pescatore ignobile," together with Schubert's "Forelle," were already noted down on one of the innumerable slips of paper to be rehearsed for the occasion.

The Conte Francopazzi's System.

The Conte Francopazzi timidly objected to the foregoing system ; his own nerves were not strong, and bombs had played too serious a part in the political feuds of his beloved country ever to be viewed by him in the light of a mere frivolous amusement. He ventured to suggest that fish should be accustomed to the sight of man by gradual stages. Find a quiet, retired pool ; go there for a week daily, with your pockets full of bread and cheese and broken meat ; and—if you are not particular about your lining—cold vegetables. Empty the contents into the retired pool every day at the same hour. At the end of the week the fish will be fat, tame, and unsuspicious. You have nothing to do now but to abuse their confidence and betray their trust by throwing in the daily meal, with the addition of hooks and lines, and you will soon have a basketful beside you. (This

system, as being destructive to coat-pockets, was at once extinguished by the Contessa.)

Baron Tolnay's System.

Baron Tolnay, being in a sort of way the King of the Djernis valley, objected to both the doctor's and the Conte's systems. The bombs he considered unnecessarily destructive, and the Contessa's ideas with regard to the ruin of coat-pockets were warmly seconded by him. He had no objection whatever to the presence of the fair sex, and he had a particular partiality for dusk; but why, he argued with a semi-royal *hauteur*—why labour with one's own hands, when there are hands enough to labour for one?

"I will order out a dozen of those lazy Roumanians," he said, with that expressive smile of his, which showed a flashing double row of teeth: "six of them shall wade up the river and drive the fish before them with stones, and the others shall hold the nets across; and meantime, we can sit on the bank and watch the spectacle in comfort; or, if we find anything more amusing to do, we need not watch the spectacle at all."

Mr Howard's System.

As for Mr Howard he regarded the bombs, the broken meat, and the wading Roumanians, all with equal and unutterable contempt. This Englishman, cut after so uncompromising a pattern of his nation as to be more English than John Bull himself, recognised nothing but the severest rules of orthodox and stern-principled trout-fishing. To approach a trout with any weapon but a rod of Farlowe's; to throw a March-brown in April, or a green-drake in June; to bait his hook with salmon-roe, like an English poacher, or with grasshoppers,

like an unenlightened foreigner,—would, in Mr Howard's eyes, have been heresy, pure and simple; as bad as taking an advantage in a duel would be for a Frenchman, or cheating at cards for an Italian, or shooting a fox for John Bull himself. Any fish not caught in accordance with the above-named principles, was, in Mr Howard's eyes, not caught at all. "There are one or two pools here where one might possibly spin a minnow," he had said reflectively, but for the stickles there is nothing but a grilse-fly.

The Landlord's System.

Flies! The landlord had no opinion whatever of those puny hooks with little tufts of feather upon them, which Mr Howard called flies. He would like to show them something that was like a fly indeed: a marvel of mechanism, wound up by clock-work, and kept thus in motion for twenty minutes at a time. That *was* a fly, as large as a butterfly almost! A patented fly, too, but unfortunately as yet too little known—hardly more known than when he had first met this marvel of mechanism fifteen years ago. That had been in the landlord's obscure days—as obscure as the fate of the mechanical fly itself—when he still held a very modest position connected with knives and forks; long before the time when he had won the landlady's heart, and stepped into the place vacated in such a tragical manner.

These were the principal systems which came into fashion in the Hercules Valley; but each of the fundamental ideas begot a fry of smaller ones. There were combinations and modifications, and a host of interpretations. The two young tallow-faced Recsulescus, for

instance, closely followed Mr Howard's manner of managing his rod and casting his line, with only the difference of the bait; for while the eldest one replaced the fly by unripe grapes, the younger was of opinion that green peas had a greater chance of success.

There were other systems of fishing, too; some of them independent of the movement started by Mr Howard, some of them even unconnected with Djernis pools and currents.

There was the kingfisher, who, darting out of the blue shadow of a cave, like a winged flash of colour, dived for his evening meal, and came up, dripping and victorious, to carry his wriggling prey into the depth of his rocky haunt, and there sup upon it in peace.

Perhaps his system was the most successful, more successful even than that of the dark-eyed oriental beauty, who rests in the secure consciousness that she has already landed her fish.

The kingfisher's cave is straight above the spot of the river which by courtesy is called "the waterfall"—and by a stretch of imagination may be taken for one. There the fish are leaping in a senseless manner, throwing themselves against the stones and dashing again and again at the narrow passage, in their efforts to reach the pool above. Not more than one in a dozen succeeds in its leap; the rest fall backstunned, to turn their heads perseveringly up-stream again, unless indeed they are caught in the rebound by one of the two Roumanian youths, who have turned their limp felt hats into impromptu landing-nets. Judging from the colour of the hats, ingrained with greenish-brown shades, it is not the first time that they have acted this part. One of these fishermen, with his jinen trousers rolled up above his

knees, has taken to the water, while the other lies flat on the slippery rock, turning from its destination many a fish, which, with an abrupt transition, finds itself landed in a well-worn felt hat, instead of in the peaceful pool above, and which, with a yet more disagreeable removal, will find itself presently landed in a frying-pan.

Gretchen, who had stopped on the bridge with Belita, began by watching; but, as she watched, she grew infected with the irresistible fishing mania. So presently she had made her way down to the water's edge, and, armed with a green butterfly-net, was rivalling the achievements of the two felt hats.

One of the fishermen was known to her by sight and name. Every now and then young Bujor would appear at the door of the Mohrs' apartment, offering for sale such natural products of the country as unfledged vultures and scorpions preserved in oil,—the latter popularly regarded as a remedy against snake-bites. It was only the other day that he had brought to the door a bear-cub, which he declared to be a great bargain, but the expression of whose countenance was not reassuring, in spite of the assurance that the little monster was *multu dulce* (very gentle).

Bujor's face was of the old Roman cast so frequent in Roumania—one of those clean-cut profiles and purely classical heads which are oftener found cut upon a gem, or stamped upon an antique medal, than met with in the labouring peasant.

Surely, thought Gretchen, Bujor's system of fishing was far preferable to that of Mr Howard. A few minutes ago they had passed the Englishman, rod in hand, stern and rigid by the river-side, followed by his two perpetual shadows, the Recsulescu boys; and, upon the well-meant question as to whether

he had caught anything, he had answered by a frown of displeasure, and the information given in a hushed voice, comprised in the one word "Nothing!" While Gretchen after ten minutes had landed almost as many sprawling little victims, very much to the disgust of Belita, who, standing on the bridge with her train gathered in one hand, chaperoned her young friend from a distance.

After a time Gretchen became aware that Belita was signalling to her with her parasol, and apparently calling out something which the noise of the water made unintelligible. Following with her eyes the direction which the waving parasol indicated, she could see two figures approaching side by side along the path. The branches overhead threw a shifting network of shade upon them, so that Gretchen did not know them till they had drawn quite close. One of them was Baron Tolnay; the other was that black-haired beauty, whom Gretchen had heard called by the name of Princess Tryphosa.

Gretchen remembered that this was the day on which Baron Tolnay was expected back from Pesth. They had not met since the evening of the dance in the Cursalon; and thinking of all that had passed on that occasion—of those words and those looks, which had been flattering, if they had been nothing else—it was not at all agreeable to her now to see him by the side of this Roumanian beauty. Taking a rapid review of the situation, she reflected again that the brigands' treasure was not yet found, even though the first step towards her plan had been taken some days ago, the humble-pie had been eaten, and the Bohemian's services accepted.

Until the appearance of this woman on the scene, she had believed that Fortune, as represented

by Baron Tolnay, was a prize which lay within her grasp, ready to be taken up or left as she chose; and even though she had not yet reached the clear understanding as to whether she did choose or not, the thought had been pleasant, and the doubt now awakened was unpleasant.

The two figures approached very slowly: the woman's silk dress trailed heavily on the ground behind her. They reached the bridge, and turned on to it, and now they were standing, still side by side, looking down at the water.

All this Gretchen, without once raising her eyes, distinctly saw. From under her eyelashes she kept the bridge in view, while to the spectators she appeared to be only fishing. And fishing she undoubtedly was, although she thought very little now about the wriggling white captives within her net. This calm indifference, this languid ignoring of the gaze upon her, it was all, according to her own theories, an advantageous laying out of capital from which she hoped a profitable return. With the net of her golden hair, with the line of her graceful arm, with the bait of her rosy lips, Gretchen was fishing—fishing for her fortune in the waters of the Djernis.

Almost any man but István Tolnay must have found his situation embarrassing. Beside him there stood a woman, and below by the water's edge there stood another woman; and his relation towards each of these women was considerably beyond that of a mere acquaintance or friend; each of them looked upon him as being in a sort of way her property, and each expected from him something, which he could not possibly give to both. But István Tolnay did not find it embarrassing; he had not even taken the trouble to fore-

see this contingency, which sooner or later must have come to pass. It was not his habit to foresee events, or to make plans for even the most immediate future. He suffered from a species of mental short-sightedness which made it impossible for him to see what was coming. A boundless trust in his luck, or his quickness of thought, in chance, or in anything, was all the provision he made against a disagreeable contingency. The pleasure of the hour, the excitement of the hour, the pain, the passion of the hour, these alone had value; for the present was everything, the future nothing. Like the lilies of the field, he took no thought of the morrow; like them, he did not spin, neither did he weave. Fate had made him a rich man; but even had he been born poor, most assuredly he would not have been given to ask himself what he should eat on the morrow, nor wherewith he should clothe himself. Beggary, disgrace, or death could never have preyed upon his mind in advance. They did not touch him as long as they were not there: a glass of red wine at the moment would be to him a more vital thing than the misfortune to be suffered next week; and a smile from a pretty woman to-day, consolation enough for the ruin of to-morrow. Yes; and even though the future were to unclothe, and show him the spot where stands his grave, István Tolnay would go forward to meet his fate, as much István Tolnay as ever, whistling the air that pleases him best, with his boots polished to exactly the right degree, and his black moustache stiffened at exactly the most becoming angle.

He had found it pleasant to saunter along the path by the side of the dark-haired beauty; and now he was thinking that it would

be still more pleasant to stand beside the fair-haired beauty down by the water's edge. It only wanted some faint shadow of an excuse to free him from his position on the bridge. Patience! his luck or his wit would come to his aid, he felt sure. That rock down there was coated with slippery weed,—supposing she should lose her balance——

And it seemed as though his unspoken wish were to be fulfilled on the instant; for a sharp cry pierced the air—

"Utisce, utisce! la kokona!"
(See, see! the young lady!) Bujor was crying.

There was a slip below, and a momentary scramble: the green gauze net was swept down the current.

"She is falling!" cried István; and he precipitately left the bridge.

"No, worse than that!" the Contessa called after him,—*"her hat is in!—her new black feather! Save it, Baron Tolnay!"*

The hat would do quite as well, thought Baron Tolnay, as he made his way through the stones to the river-side. *"Desolated to have to leave you in this way, Princess!"* he had said, with a glance to match the words, as he hurriedly left her side; and now he was smiling to himself confidentially under his moustache, as he thought how safe he would be down here from the ears, if not from the eyes, of that woman on the bridge.

Gretchen was standing bareheaded by the water-edge, with a shower of water-drops sparkling in her hair, as she directed her two Roumanian assistants in the capture of the floating hat. From above, Belita, agitated spectator of the scene, called out unintelligible advice, and gazed at the sinking feather as if it had been a drowning child.

"Am I in time?" asked István, with a little artificial breathlessness, as he reached the scene of action. "Pasha would have fetched it in a moment: I wish he were here!"

"But since he is not, Baron Tolnay, would it not be more logical to wish that the hat had never fallen in?"

"But I wish nothing of the sort. If the hat were still on your head, I should be still on the bridge."

"Oh, were you on the bridge?" said Gretchen, with a movement of surprise, quite as artificial as István's breathlessness.

"I have been standing there for ages."

"Indeed!" with her nose rather high in the air. "You must have found the bridge very entertaining?"

"Very; with such a picture to look at."

"You admire landscapes?"

"Not unless there are foreground figures in them."

"Those Roumanians are very picturesque, certainly."

István laughed.

"You surely do not suppose that I was looking at that vermin? There, stand back!" as the triumphant Bujor held out the dripping hat, "Stand back, you dog, I say!"

"Baron Tolnay!"

The grey eyes looked almost stern for a moment. "Do you call this justice? How can you treat him in this way?"

István gazed at her in genuine surprise.

"But he is not accustomed to being treated in any other way, Fräulein Mohr!"

"I treat him in another way."

"But they are vermin, you know," said István, good-naturedly.

"Baron Tolnay——"

"You object? Very well, Fräulein Mohr, to oblige you, I will retract. I will not say that they are vermin. I will even go the length of saying they are not vermin, should that give you the very smallest satisfaction. Look, you shall mark the generosity of my forgiving soul"—and he took a handful of loose silver from his pocket and tossed it negligently towards Bujor. "This is the only language they understand."

Gretchen half expected the insulted peasant to fold his arms, and with his foot to spurn the proffered coin, haughty and disdainful, as an ancient hero defying a tyrant. But, alas for the degeneracy of these days! This man, who could have stood as model of a Roman centurion, now humbly crouched down, and uttering an abject "*Mulczanim Domno!*" (I thank you, master!) patiently searched for the scattered coins which had been flung to him upon the stones of the river-side.

"How very generous of you to forgive him for having saved my hat!" said Gretchen, still with a ring of scorn in her voice.

"Not generous, magnanimous! It is positively noble of me not to grudge any one the pleasure of having served you."

The tone of the conversation was becoming perilous, thought Gretchen; it was safer to let it drop. She was quick at these conversational skirmishes, but he was quicker; and there were moments when she felt an uneasy distrust of this man, with his brilliant conversation, his brilliant eyes, his brilliant smile, and his over brilliant boots.

With her face turned towards the river, Gretchen stood and watched the hurrying waters; Tolnay stood beside her. The rescued hat lay beside them on the rock, slowly drying in the breeze.

A little while ago the sunshine had been on the river ; now it was gone, and with it was gone the colour and the brightness of the overhanging rocks and sharp-cornered granite stones : the king-fisher's cave above the waterfall had deepened to a gloomy blue. But there is much to look at still, and much to listen to ; this subdued colouring is grateful to an eye tired of the sunny glare, and flattering to a dreamy mood. Those dark-green pools where the water circles round and round so sleepily ; those slanting stones down whose polished sides it slides in a sheet of smooth glass, to break at its base and curl away in frothy wavelets ; those patches of milk-white foam clinging in stagnant repose to some drifted tree-branch, yet torn unmercifully by the shock of the passing current,—these are in themselves small pictures which together make a great one. And there is much to listen to, for there is no river more musical than the Djernis. Every drowned tree-carass caught fast between two rocks is excuse enough for this spoilt child of the mountains to break into loud-murmured and most melodious complaint : over every marble block and every boulder-stone it will fret and foam and work itself into a frenzy of bubbles and froth. There are singing voices in the currents and phantom choruses in the whirling pools. And the more you listen the more you will hear. From the hollow of a cave there floats a melody, sweet and plaintive as though the water-spirits in there were touching the strings of their harps ; the wavelets which lap against the rock are playing a rippling accompaniment, and in the strong, swift sweep of the current hurrying past, there rolls back a deep-toned reply. Where the

water rushes headlong over a broken bed you could fancy a peal of silver bells ; and there where it flings itself with a crash and a cloud of flying spray down the rock, you seem to hear the thunder of a mighty organ, played by invisible hands.

Silenced by the wildness of this varied orchestra, Gretchen stood and waited till her hat should be dry. Even Tolnay seemed to have realised that compliments, however gracefully turned, must lose some of their charm when shouted at the top of the voice.

Suddenly Gretchen became aware that an unknown parasol-handle was being protruded before her eyes, while an unknown voice said deliberately—

“*Mademoiselle, votre chapeau.*”

This was all that reached her ears. The fingers which grasped the ivory handle were stained yellow at the tips. Gretchen turned round, and found herself confronted by Princess Tryphosa.

Tolnay turned also, and for a moment doubted the evidence of his eyes. A long, low whistle would have been most expressive of his feelings at this moment, but he was too well-bred to attempt anything of the sort. He was a little dismayed, though the sensation was only transitory. He had never contemplated the possibility of these few yards of shingle being actually traversed by a Roumanian lady of high degree. It was a phenomenon perfectly unparalleled in his experience, and certainly it was calculated to awake some inconvenient thoughts as to the strength of motive which must exist.

Gretchen was scarcely less surprised, and it took a few seconds before she could understand what Princess Tryphosa's object was. She was offering her parasol. There

was no sun now, thought Gretchen, looking up; what was the use of a parasol? No, that was not the Princess's intention: the parasol was for the rescue of the fugitive hat, which for some minutes had been reposing peacefully on the rock beside her. The intention was excellent, though the offer came a little tardily. Gretchen expressed her gratitude.

"I see I am too late," said the Princess, with ponderous good-nature, after gazing at the damp hat intently for a minute. During this minute Gretchen was putting her new acquaintance through a critical examination.

The Princess wore a pale silk dress, long-trained and with trimmings of lace. Her black hair was uncovered, and her neck and arms were loaded with coral ornaments. She was a little older-looking seen thus near, perhaps twenty-six, but she lost nothing in beauty. She was a rich Southern flower, full blown and at the prime of its perfection. A little time more and the flower would be overblown; now it has attained that perfect development which has not yet been touched by decay. A few more years of indolent habits will have destroyed the symmetry of her splendid figure; some hundred-weight more of *dulcétia* will have stained the enamel of her dazzling teeth; a few thousand more cigarettes will have deepened the delicate amber-tint on her fingers to an unsightly brown; time may even develop the dark shadow above her lip, which as yet is only a silky down, into an unbecomingly masculine ornament; inaction, sickly sweetmeats, and tobacco together, will soon have deteriorated the general cast of her features. But all this will only be some years hence. She may not be beautiful for long, but certainly she is beauti-

ful now. Her eyes alone—eyes of the languid oriental type—would be enough to make her beautiful. They are peculiarly deep, and instinctively you wonder what lies under that depth: is it an immense fund of brooding passion, or only an immense stupidity?

This was the question which Gretchen asked herself, even as she acknowledged Princess Tryphosa's beauty. She acknowledged it freely, without reserve and almost without a pang. There was too absolute a difference between the styles of their beauty to admit of jealousy on that score. The rival whom a beautiful woman most fears is always the one who is likest herself: a blonde will better stand being outshone by a brunette than by one of her own complexion, just as a swarthy beauty will hate a fair-skinned rival less than one who poaches on her own premises by being dark. Gretchen's self-confidence was not shaken; Tryphosa's beauty was an incentive which made her spirit rise at the thought of the coming warfare. She stood and looked full at the Princess, and the Princess looked full at her; and between the two stood István Tolnay, with a gleam of something inscrutable in his eyes, and with his most provoking smile upon his face.

"Princess!" he cried, in polite consternation—for it was necessary that somebody should throw himself into the breach—"why did you not call me to your assistance? How shall I ever forgive myself for having let you approach thus unnoticed? I cannot plead being either deaf or short-sighted. *A propos*,"—and he turned to Gretchen—"that word reminds me—where have you left that excellent family lawyer, or family friend, Fräulein Mohr?"

"At Draskócs."

"Oh, really? He does not seem to have drunk deeply of the Waters of Hercules; our valley has no charm for him. I suppose he is not thinking of repeating his visit?"

"You suppose quite wrong, then. Dr Komers is going to spend his holiday here; he only stayed at Draskócs because——"

"Because of the noise of the waterfall," said Princess Tryphosa, deliberately. "You could not have heard me if I had called; and, besides, you were busy in fishing up the hat."

"Ah, to be sure," said Tolnay who had forgotten the offer of his assistance as soon as it had been spoken.

"It was István who fished up the hat, was it not?" asked the Princess, turning to Gretchen with her slow smile and her steady gaze. Apparently she did not consider the subject of the hat exhausted quite yet; and it was against her habit to quit a subject until she had mastered it thoroughly.

"No," answered Gretchen, wondering a little at the tone of proprietorship with which that "István" was pronounced—"it was not Baron Tolnay who fished up my hat; although I think he is half

persuaded that he has been doing wonders of bravery, and has saved not only my hat but also my life."

Princess Tryphosa appeared to be troubled: the answer was to her bewildering, as Gretchen herself was altogether bewildering. She could not find an answer which satisfied her at the moment, but she decided to think out the question during the walk home.

It was this that kept her silent while the others talked and laughed beside her.

When they had walked some distance down the valley, they saw a big shadow, with two smaller shadows behind it.

"Have you caught anything, Sir Hovart?" called down Tolnay cheerfully; and, in his painfully hushed voice, Mr Howard answered now as before—

"Nothing."

Gretchen and Belita laughed, and Tolnay laughed; and five minutes later, when they had forgotten the stiff fisherman with his empty basket and his unshakable dignity, Princess Tryphosa laughed—a deep and musical laugh.

The situation was not lost upon her, but it had taken a little time to penetrate.

CHAPTER XXIV.—PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AMUSEMENTS.

"Then one sat down and sighed,
Of finding Fortune I begin to doubt,
And fear we may have taken the wrong way."

—LORD LYTTON.

An international congress of geologists had gathered together at Pesth in the interest of science. As the interest of science demands recreation for the overworked mind, and as the Hungarian Government was willing to pay the expense, the learned men made expeditions to various places—to the Hercules Valley amongst others.

The Hercules Valley was immensely flattered at being in this way chosen, and worked enthusiastically at preparations for the reception of the learned men. The arrangements for their food and their lodging and their amusement occupied the Hercules Waters for a week. Flower-arches and ribbon-streamers transfigured the lonely

Djernis valley. It might have been fancied that the mountains were celebrating their coming of age, or that the wild Djernis itself was going to lead home a young bride. The stone Hercules, whose club was wreathed with roses for the occasion, must have been carried back in memory to the time of Roman triumphs.

Needless to say that in the department of amusements Dr Kokovics held complete sway. He revelled in garlands and paper-scrolls; his fertile brain teemed with fireworks and colossal illuminations. For at least a week before the great day his dreams were exclusively of rockets and Chinese lanterns.

The learned men came, one dusty forenoon; fifty learned men with forty pair of spectacles between them. Geologists principally; but they had brought their friends with them, disciples of various sciences. They smiled at the flower-arches, nodded at the streamers, and pretended they could read the inscriptions; after which they proceeded to refresh themselves with a bath. They then ate an excellent dinner, laid out for them in the Cursalon, while the galleries above were crowded with spectators who wished to see what science looked like at food. A great many toasts were drunk, and in different languages. There was a flowery French speech; and an excited Italian speech; a nasal speech pronounced by an American, whom Mr Howard had repeatedly and indignantly repudiated as a countryman; then a furious German got to his feet and hammered out a few angular sentences to the effect that idleness was the mother of mischief, and that everybody must work, work, work, if they wanted to get on in this world. After which he sat down, wiping

the perspiration from his streaming forehead, and savagely helped himself to roast-turkey and salad.

Red wine flowed uninterruptedly; and the fifty learned men, as well as some others, notably Dr Kokovics, were in a very jovial humour when they emerged from the Cursalon. There was then a stroll along the river, in the interest of science; the Roman inscriptions were read by a few, and pronounced interesting. One learned man went the length of chipping off a corner of a stone with his iron-shod stick, and observing that the fragment was marble. Then came the saunter back, and the prospect of the fireworks; and next day the learned men would drive back the way they came, fully persuaded that the interests of science had been greatly furthered by their visit to the Hercules Valley.

One of the learned men, on his return from the river-side, made his way up to the Mohrs' apartments to pay his respects to a friend and colleague.

"Well, Steinwurm," said Adalbert, with a faint smile, "you don't see me much more advanced than I was in May."

"On the contrary, on the contrary," ejaculated the musty-fusty Herr Steinwurm, with his parchment-skin and his fossil smile—"I hardly expected to find you so well. One of our learned medical friends whom I met the other day was quite surprised to hear that you were still alive. I think it disappointed him," added Steinwurm, by way of a joke; for the floods of red wine, though they had not sufficed to wash away the cobwebs of antiquity, had yet raised the historian's spirits almost to the level of cheerfulness.

"Anything new at home?" asked Adalbert.

"Ah, my dear friend," sighed Herr Steinwurm, "science has had a bitter disappointment! You remember the vault of the Frauenkirche, and the inscription on that stone?"

"I should rather think I do," said Adalbert, drily; "the stone has laid its inscription on me somewhat severely."

"Well, my dear friend, it is a sad fact that that fall has mutilated the inscription beyond all hope of recognition. I do not wish to reproach you for your part in the unfortunate accident, but science, alas! has to bewail a heavy loss."

"So has her victim," said Adalbert, in a tone of irony quite new in him.

"Victim of science! Glorious title!" mused Steinwurm aloud.

"If you are anxious to earn the glory of the title," said Adalbert, with a gleam of his old humour, "stay here and explore the mountains. There are precipices in plenty, and there is besides, a bottomless hole in the forest, which we are searching for; and when it is found we shall have to let down a man on a rope to sound it. I think you would be the very man for that, my dear Steinwurm; your stature and your weight point you out as the appropriate instrument."

"Thank you," said Steinwurm, a little hurriedly.

The programme did not sound reassuring.

"I should hardly feel justified. I—I—you see, I am a family man."

"So am I," said Adalbert.

"Yes—but, do you know, I am not particularly sure of my legs in mountain-climbing; a little weakness in the knees ever since my childhood. Where—where is your charming daughter?" burst out

the unfortunate historian, as a desperate transition on to safer ground. He was answered by Dr Komers, who, sitting at a little distance, had taken no part in the discussion. It was two days since Vincenz, having wound up the small affairs of Draskócs, and seen Ascelinde's guardian laid to rest, had returned to the Hercules Valley. "Fräulein Mohr has gone out to meet her brother," he said, in reply to Herr Steinwurm's question.

"Oh, has she?" answered Kurt's voice from the doorway; "her brother was not aware of the fact."

"Did you not meet your sister?" asked the lawyer; "she went up the hillside to look for you."

"Never met anybody," said Kurt, lighting a cigar. "I never went to the hill at all: I have been down to the river to see if there were no geologists to pick out of it: they were not walking over-straight when I saw them last."

And having taken place on a chair, and stretched his legs on another, Kurt proceeded to make himself comfortable with his cigar and the paper.

Dr Komers, without further remark, quietly left the room.

Kurt continued to read his paper, and the two historians talked history, and Ascelinde, who had left her bed some days ago, occasionally wandered into the room and out of it again, looking like a ghost of her former self. And meanwhile the dusk began to fall, and neither Gretchen nor Dr Komers had yet returned.

At the moment when Kurt was lighting his cigar and luxuriously distributing his person between two chairs, Gretchen had already reached some distance from home; and under the delusion that her brother must be in advance, was

slowly climbing the steep mountain-path.

The wood was quite deserted—every man, woman, and child being busy below with the entertainment of the learned men.

It was many a day since Gretchen had found herself so entirely alone; and somehow she was not in a humour to relish her solitude just now. She was on bad terms with herself,—she who hitherto had always lived on such a very satisfactory footing with her conscience, her mind, and her will. Now her conscience was uneasy, her mind was perplexed, and her will—well, as for her will, she no longer felt sure of it.

The whole of the past week had been a week of fatigue, if of amusement. Wherever Gretchen went Baron Tolnay went; and where Baron Tolnay was, there also was Princess Tryphosa—unless, indeed, when Gretchen's steps had been turned to the mountains, for to the mountains Princess Tryphosa did not follow. Perhaps the dissatisfaction of Gretchen's mind arose from the fact that her first few skilfully set traps had failed to catch the simple Bohemian's secret; and that therefore Gaura Dracului, and with Gaura Dracului the brigands' treasure, and with the brigands' treasure her own fortune, still remained undiscovered. Or perhaps it was that she still felt uncertain of her victory over Tryphosa.

There were moments when she thought the victory secure, and there were others when she doubted it. The doubt had been sufficient to rouse her ambition with the stimulus of rivalry,—to prick the side of her intent, which else might have grown faint: it had added excitement to the meetings of this past week; it had urged her to throw out the line again more than

once, and to play the bait on which was to be hooked her fortune. But in the midst of the game a certain uneasy dread had seized her more than once, and to-day it was on her again. Or was this dissatisfaction perhaps a little unconscious pity for Tryphosa, who, as Gretchen had long since discovered, loved István Tolnay? But since Gretchen did not believe in love, what right had she to feel pity? No; more likely it was a sense of justice. If István Tolnay had been a prize equally coveted by them both, it would have been all fair play to contend for him on a fair field; but to take from Tryphosa that which she was not sure of wanting herself, this was what Gretchen could not quite reconcile with her notions of justice and logic.

She might have become yet more deeply involved in this train of logical deduction, had not the overhanging branch of a mountain-ash tree rudely caught her by the hair, just as her thoughts had reached this point.

It was getting late, she discovered to her surprise, and the sun was sinking brilliantly and fast. What had become of Kurt? She ought to have met him long ago. Looking round her, she wondered to find herself so high up; for the last twenty minutes she had steadily, though unconsciously, been mounting, and now she stood on a rocky path, bordered with bilberry-bushes, while the gloomy valley lay at her feet.

That uncourteous ash-tree had been the last tree of this tract of forest. Here the mountain was wellnigh bare; low brushwood grew between the rocks, tufts of delicate grass covered the ground, and wild-flowers shook unprotected in the breeze. Along the shoulder of the hill the stony path continued.

Finding herself thus alone, a little awe crept into Gretchen's heart. The forest she had just passed through had grown so black behind her; she thought with dread of the dark way home.

While she stood thus hesitating, and just preparing to retrace her steps, a far-off sound fell upon her ear, and gave sudden shape to the vague alarm which oppressed her.

She listened attentively; there were footsteps approaching, and they came from the shadow of the gloomy forest. A dark figure could just be distinguished gliding along among the trees. As far as she could see, it was the figure of a tall strong man, certainly a figure that bore not the slightest resemblance to the brother she was looking for. Gretchen possessed a cool head in emergencies,—at least so she always affirmed; she was inclined to be proud of her presence of mind, but her self-possession was not as perfect as usual to-day. The combination of the solitude, the dusk, and the sudden sight of that figure, sent a rush of cold terror to her heart. She hesitated for one moment longer, unwilling to yield to this fear; but when she heard a distinct cry, a sort of halloo, come out of the wood, breaking the silence of the mountain-side and echoing back from the rocks, she did not hesitate longer, but started off running in the opposite direction, firmly convinced that that cry had been the signal of the robber-captain calling together his band. Five minutes ago Gretchen did not believe in the existence of the robbers; but she is not the first philosopher who has discovered that theories will not always hold good in practice. She ran along the path, sending the loose stones flying away from under her feet, whence they leaped over the edge and went bounding down the steep hillside. She felt the evening wind rush past her

ears in a current. At every turn of the path she feared to come upon the bandit camp, but yet she dared not turn back; and in the protruding branch of every bush she saw a pistol pointed at her head. The tree-tops, nodding high above her, seemed to be telling each other tales of murder and bloodshed; each white ox-eye daisy, trembling on its stalk like a solitary star, stared at her with a pale and panic-stricken face as she flew past. Her steps slackened at last, and she stood still breathless. Was she being pursued? She listened, holding her breath with difficulty. There was no sound whatever; but the deep shadows round her were closing in as if they would swallow her up among them.

The next thing to do was to collect her thoughts and consider her position from a logical point of view. To go back by the way she had come was out of the question; her courage was not equal to risk meeting that black figure she had seen in the wood. All around her there were scattered rocks; but to the left a stony track dipped down with a steep and sudden curve. According to all reasonable calculations, that track must lead straight back towards the Hercules Baths.

She turned resolutely down it. It was rugged, and steeper than she had at first imagined. "Never mind," thought Gretchen—"if it is so steep, it stands to reason that it must be a short cut." On each side there was a wall of rock, bare, except where some bush pushed its thorny head from out of a slit high up. There was a narrow strip of evening sky above Gretchen's head, and nothing but rough stones under her feet.

The first few steps had been comparatively easy; but soon the path grew more precipitate, turning and twisting, and taking sud-

den jumps, in a way which paths in general do not affect. She had to steady herself by the rocks, for the stones slipped under her feet; each step sent a shower of small boulders chasing each other down the pathway.

Again there was a sound, high above her this time, and she stood still to listen. It was only the voice of an eagle, roused out of its first sleep, and scolding the intruder who dared to penetrate this solitude.

What beautiful spot was this she had come to? wondered Gretchen, as she looked around her; so beautiful, that it almost made her forget her fright. The walls of rock on each side had retreated for a little space, and here, before her eyes, lay a circular basin, rippling in living green waves. And yet there was no drop of water here; the waves were only the leaves of wild hartstongue ferns which filled the hollow to overflowing, curving over each other in graceful arches, and crowding up to the foot of the overhanging rock. Each glossy leaf, with delicately crimped edge, rose and fell as softly as a swelling wave. More than one sharp stone reared its head right through the midst of the green pool.

Gretchen looked round her, and paused in spite of herself; she could hear her own heart-beats in the solemn silence. But she dared not linger, she traversed the oval space, walking through the midst of the waving hartstongue, and then the rocks narrowed again, and the track dipped down steeper than before. It must be a very short cut indeed, she thought, as she waded through tangles of green fern; it was all she could do to feel her way down under the thick overgrowth which masked the passage. There were dead tree-trunks across her way, and bramble-branches

straggling over them. The gorge narrowed every moment, until her steps struck a hollow echo in the enclosed passage, and the air grew strangely chill. Now there was hardly room for her to pass between the two walls. In another moment she half expected her passage to be barred, when all at once it widened again, and at the same moment Gretchen found herself suddenly brought up.

It would be a very short cut indeed to reach the Hercules Baths this way; for at her feet there fell a precipice sheer and straight. At the two sides of the gorge's mouth, the mass of rock jutted forward a little. One or two flat-topped stone-pines, like gigantic umbrellas in shape, and sombre to blackness in the evening light, flung themselves boldly forward, their twisted roots clinging to the naked stone, while the fading sky behind sharply set off each line of branch and trunk.

This was the rock at the foot of which lay the Cursalon, and this gorge was the narrow slit Gretchen had so often looked at from below. The path she had followed was nothing but the stony bed which a winter torrent had left dry, and which the green hartstongue had usurped in place of the mountain stream. The Hercules Baths lay at her feet; the Cursalon and the monster hotels turned up their roofs towards her. She was close to them and yet inseparably divided. She could count the windows of the houses opposite; she could even hear the band of music playing, and distinguish the voices of the people; but she would have to retrace the whole way she had come before she could be at home. With a shudder, the thought flashed upon her that this was the gorge which even from below people looked at in terror; it was here that the robbers had been seen

watching the Hercules Valley and planning destruction to its inhabitants. How impossible the story had sounded then ! How possible it sounded now ! Most alarmingly possible in the silence of this rocky solitude.

Gretchen swept a searching glance around her, and in the same moment she had to suppress an exclamation of fear. Here, indeed, was food for her terror ; not two paces off there lay something black on the ground.

This was something which did not belong to the rocky solitude, which had not grown there—no product of nature. Gretchen stooped and examined it ; it was a wide-brimmed felt hat—just the very hat which a bandit might be supposed to wear drawn over his brows.

For a moment she stood still, petrified with terror, unable to take her eyes off the ominous hat all at once ; but, rousing herself, she reflected that every second was precious. She held her dress for fear of its rustling, and on tip-toe she prepared to leave the spot.

Before she had made two steps she got a new fright. Here was something which belonged as little to the rocky solitude as to the bandits ; for what could robbers have in common with this coloured-paper lantern dangling from a branch ?

A stone rolled close beside her, and in the same instant a man stepped out from behind a rock, and barred her passage. She screamed with the sudden start. Her first sensation was helpless terror ; her second momentary relief ; her third was terror again, but terror of a different sort, for the man confronting her was no brigand,—it was Dr Kokovics.

Not that Dr Kokovics at this moment, with his dishevelled hair, his flushed face, and his somewhat

disordered toilet, might not have passed for a very fair imitation of a brigand. Even through the dusk his jovial humour was evident ; the excellent dinner of which, in company with the men of science, he had this afternoon partaken, had indisputably left its mark. What could be the meaning of his presence here ? Gretchen asked herself in the first moment of surprise ; but in the next already she had remembered the Chinese lantern, and there came back to her recollection the vast plans of illumination for this evening which Dr Kokovics was known to entertain. Doubtless the floods of red wine which had accompanied the excellent dinner had served to render those plans more vast, and had engendered in the doctor's fertile brain the grand idea of lighting up the gorge above the Cursalon.

Gretchen had recoiled at the moment of recognition, but the doctor advanced, unchilled by his reception.

"By the club of Hercules !" he cried, "this is luck ! What happiness ! What sweet and unexpected happiness !" he ejaculated rapidly, shaking back his hair as he came towards her. "To what good star do I owe this meeting with the beautiful Gretchen ?"

"Thank you, I am going home," said Gretchen, retreating another step, and beginning to tremble, for the excitement about his words and gestures was unmistakable.

"You look frightened," said the doctor, stopping and gazing at her ; "this solitude alarms your gentle mind. But fear nothing ; trust yourself to me ; Kokovics is your knight. This arm will——"

"I—I don't want to speak to you, Dr Kokovics," said Gretchen, steadying her voice. "I wish you would let me pass."

She made a step forward, but the movement aroused the doctor's

excitement to an alarming degree. He spread out his two arms in such a way as to suggest a gigantic black bat preparing to fly, and effectually to bar the narrow entrance of the gorge.

"Cruel Gretchen! By what crime have I deserved this treatment? Has not my devotion touched your heart? Why have you persisted in closing your eyes to the humble verses I have dared to lay at your feet? Why will you withhold from this poor love-sick heart

'The medicine of thy smile'?"

declaimed the Roumanian with appropriate quotation from his latest stanza.

"Be thou my doctor!"

he hummed softly, wedding his thought to music on the spur of the moment. "Assuredly, O fair physician, I am not your first case, but undoubtedly I am the most desperate. Our correspondence is my only solace, the one recipe which can cure my——"

"Our correspondence! How dare you speak of 'our' correspondence?" cried Gretchen, with icy scorn.

She had retreated step by step, until she now stood on the edge of the tiny platform, looking down straight at the houses below. Down there the people were talking, and the music was still playing. She could count the trees in the garden, she could distinguish the stone Hercules at his post. Ah, if the god of the valley would but scale the rock and wield his club in her assistance! To be so near help and yet so far, made the situation only the more tantalising.

"Yes, our correspondence, fair Gretchen; but I will reproach you no longer. This *rencontre* makes up for everything; how gracious of you to meet me here, and thus

by your glorious presence to sweeten my task! You find me working for the public amusement; but do not imagine that I neglect the public for the private on that account. How delightful such a task will be when shared by you! Together we will labour; together mount the rocks, and hand in hand we shall kindle the fairy lamps."

The colour burned like a red flame in Gretchen's cheek; she was shaking from head to foot, for the Roumanian's glittering eyes struck her with terror.

"Dr Kokovics, will you let me pass this instant? Every word you say is an insult. I refuse any explanation. Have you forgotten that you have a wife and children?"

"Eight children!" cried the doctor, with a resounding sigh, and he plunged both his hands into the deep waves of his hair. "*Me Hercle!* Oh barbarous cruelty of woman! You are not going to cast them up all eight in my face, fair Gretchen?"

"If you do not stand aside immediately," said Gretchen, "I shall call for help to the people below."

"They could not scale the rock, fair lady; it would be a useless strain upon your delicate throat, which, as a doctor, I could not countenance. True, I have not the happiness of being your medical attendant; but in this felicitous moment who can forbid me to sing—

'Be thou my patient'?"

He came a step nearer to her. "Why this haste to terminate our delightful meeting? Consider the beauty of the spot! Look at the weirdly towering rocks all around us, the carpet of waving fern at our feet; we are in the heart of nature; what place more beautiful for a lovers' meeting? My muse inspires me—the verses are crowding

to my head ; I shall write a sonnet upon this happy moment ! ”

“ Let me pass,—let me pass ! ” cried Gretchen, in an agony, pushing out her two hands before her, for the doctor, flushed and smiling, was slowly coming nearer. On one side this odious man, on the other the precipice. Would not the precipice be the lesser evil of the two ? In her terror she almost thought so ; she did not shrink as she measured the black and giddy cliff. Might she not save herself by clinging to a ledge, or to one of those strong-armed bushes below ?

Her bewilderment was so great that she had not heard an approaching sound coming down the gorge. Now a distinct shout struck her ear ; it was the same sound which had scared her in the wood a little time ago. It must be the robbers coming ; but the robbers could not make matters worse than they were, and possibly they might make them better. With what delight she would yield up her purse and her ear-rings in order to be rid of this odious man !

“ We are wasting our moments, beautiful Gretchen ! ” cried the doctor, advancing. “ You cannot deny me one kiss ! ”

“ If you come a step nearer, I shall jump down the rock,” she said, deadly pale by this time.

“ I could never allow that—as a doctor,” said the Roumanian ; and as she stood with one foot on the brink, he seized both her hands and drew her forward.

With the fury of despair, she struggled ; her teeth set, her eyes flaring wildly. The leap down the rock would have been easy at that moment, for close before her was the Roumanian’s flushed face.

She shut her eyes, and shuddered in sickening dread ; his fingers closed round her wrists with a

drunken strength. The whole scene swam in her brain,—rocks and trees and Chinese lanterns were blended into one formless mass.

“ I could never allow that,—by the club of Her——” The Roumanian’s customary invocation turned suddenly into something that sounded very like a curse. Was that the doctor’s voice ?

With a wrench Gretchen felt herself freed, and, looking up, she saw what looked like Dr Kokovics turned into two Dr Kokovices, and the first Kokovics grappling with the second in the dust.

Terror had so blinded her, that she could not at once understand what had happened ; she could only stand by, staring helplessly at those fighting men. Had the god of the valley come indeed to her assistance ? and were those the strokes of his weapon ? The walls of rock threw back the sounds which struck upon them, and they were ghastly sounds indeed ; hot curses and heavy blows following upon each other furiously and fast. Never, until this moment, had man dared to desecrate with his passion this wild sanctuary of nature. Both combatants were tall and strong, but the Roumanian was perhaps rather less steady on his legs than usual. It was not a minute after the first attack that one of the two men was down, on the very brink of the abyss, and his opponent above him, with one knee on his chest, and his hands upon his throat.

Gretchen uttered a half-stifled scream, for it seemed as if the conqueror, in the heat of his victory, were going to fling the vanquished man down that fearful rock.

At the sound of her voice the kneeling man turned, and in the failing light she recognised Vincenz Komers.

ON SOME OF SHAKESPEARE'S FEMALE CHARACTERS :

BY ONE WHO HAS PERSONATED THEM.

VIII.—BEATRICE.

" There was a star danced, and under that was I born."

DEAR MR. RUSKIN,—

I am glad to see by your letter that Beatrice is a favourite with you. The heresy of Campbell and others, that describes her as a compound of tomboy, flirt, and shrew,—"an odious woman," I think, Campbell calls her,—has manifestly not enlisted you among its adherents. Whilst, therefore, I am sure of your sympathy in trying to put into words the conception of this brilliant and charming woman which I endeavoured to embody on the stage, still I must approach the subject with great trepidation, as you tell me that you are "listening with all your heart to what I shall say of her." I cannot dare to hope that I shall throw much light upon the character that will be new to you, who have shown, in so many places, how thorough has been your study of Shakespeare's heroines, and with what loving insight you have used them to illustrate the part women have played, and are meant to play, in bringing sweetness and comfort, and help and moral strength, into man's troubled and perplexing life. The lesson Shakespeare teaches seems to me to be entirely in accordance with your own belief, expressed in many ways, "that no man ever lived a right life who had not been chastened by a woman's love, strengthened by her courage, and guided by her discretion."

Of Beatrice I cannot write with the same full heart, or with the same glow of sympathy, with which

I wrote of Rosalind. Her character is not to me so engaging. We might hope to meet in life something to remind us of Beatrice; but in our dreams of fair women Rosalind stands out alone.

Neither are the circumstances under which Beatrice comes before us of a kind to draw us so closely to her. Unlike Rosalind, her life has been and is, while we see her, one of pure sunshine. Sorrow and wrong have not softened her nature, nor taken off the keen edge of her wit. When we are introduced to her, she is the great lady, bright, brilliant, beautiful, enforcing admiration as she moves "in maiden meditation fancy free" among the fine ladies and accomplished gallants of her circle. Up to this time there has been no call upon the deeper and finer qualities of her nature. The sacred fountain of tears has never been stirred within her. To pain of heart she has been a stranger. She has not learned tenderness or toleration under the discipline of suffering or disappointment, of unsatisfied yearning or failure. Her life has been

"A summer mood,
To which all pleasant things have come
unsought,"

and across which the shadows of care or sorrow have never passed. She has a quick eye to see what is weak or ludicrous in man or woman. The impulse to speak out the smart and poignant things that rise readily and swiftly to her lips,

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is irresistible. She does not mean to inflict pain, though others besides Benedick must at times have felt that "every word stabs." She simply rejoices in the keen sword-play of her wit as she would in any other exercise of her intellect or sport of her fancy. In very gaiety of heart she flashes around her the playful lightning of sarcasm and repartee, thinking of them only as something to make the time pass brightly by. "I was born," she says of herself, "to speak all mirth and no matter." Again, when Don Pedro tells her she has "a merry heart," she answers, "Yea, my lord, I thank it; poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care." And what does her uncle Leonato say of her?—

"There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord: she is never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamt of unhappiness and waked herself with laughing."—(Act ii. sc. 1.)

Woosers she has had, of course, not a few; but, she has "mocked them all out of suit." Very dear to her is the independence of her maidenhood,—for the moment has not come when to surrender that independence into a lover's hands is more delightful than to maintain it. But though in the early scenes of the play she makes a mock of wooers and of marriage, with obvious zest and with a brilliancy of fancy and pungency of sarcasm that might well appal any ordinary wooer, it is my conviction that, though her heart has not as yet been touched, she has at any rate begun to see in "Signor Benedick of Padua" qualities which have caught her fancy. She has noted him closely, and his image recurs unbidden to her mind with a frequency which suggests that he is at least more to her than any other

man. The train is laid, and only requires a spark to kindle it into flame. How this is done by Shakespeare, and with what exquisite skill, will be more and more felt the more closely the structure of the play and the distinctive qualities of the actors in it are studied.

I think, indeed, this play should rank, in point of dramatic construction and development of character, with the best of Shakespeare's works. It has the further distinction, that whatever is most valuable in the plot is due solely to his own invention. In this respect it differs signally from "*As You Like It*." In "*The Tale of Gamelyn*," and more particularly in Lodge's "*Rosalynde*," Shakespeare found ready to his hand the main plot of that play, and suggestions for several of the characters. With his usual wonderful aptitude, he assimilated everything that could be turned to dramatic account. Yet his debt was, after all, of no great amount. He had to discard far more than he adopted. The story with the actors in it became a new creation; and by infusing into a pretty but tedious pastoral and some very unreal characters a purpose and a life which were exclusively his own, he transmuted mere pebbles into gems. But neither for plot nor character was he indebted to any one in "*Much Ado About Nothing*." It is, no doubt, true that in Ariosto and Bandello, and in our own Spenser, he found the incident of an innocent lady brought under cruellest suspicion by the base device of which Hero is the victim. Here, however, his obligation ends; and but for the skill with which this incident is interwoven with others, and a number of characters brought upon the scene, which are wholly of his own creating, it would be of little value for dramatic purposes.

How happy was the introduction of such men as Dogberry—dear, delightful Dogberry!—and his band, “the shallow fools who brought to light” the flimsy villainy by which Don Pedro and Claudio had allowed themselves to be egregiously befooled? How true to the irony of life was the accident, due also to Shakespeare’s invention, of Leonato’s being too much bored by their tedious prate, and too busy with the thought of his daughter’s approaching marriage, to listen to them, and thus not hearing what would have prevented the all but tragic scene in which that marriage is broken off! And how much happier than all is the way in which the wrong done to Hero is the means of bringing into view the fine and generous elements of Beatrice’s nature,—of showing Benedick how much more there was in her than he had thought, and at the same time proving to her, what she was previously quite prepared to “believe better than reportingly,” that he was of a truly “noble strain,” and that she might safely intrust her happiness to his hands! Viewed in this light, the play seems to me to be a masterpiece of construction, developed with consummate skill, and held together by the unflagging interest which we feel in Beatrice and Benedick, and in the progress of the amusing plot by which they arrive at a knowledge of their own hearts.

I was called upon very early in my career to impersonate Beatrice, but I must frankly admit that, while, as I have said, I could not but admire her, she had not taken hold of my heart as my other heroines had done. Indeed there is nothing of the heroine about her, nothing of romance or of poetic suggestion in the circumstances of her life—nothing, in

short, to captivate the imagination of a very young girl, such as I then was. It was no small surprise to me when Mr Charles Kemble, who was playing a series of farewell performances at Covent Garden, where I had made my *début* on the stage but a few months before, singled me out to play Beatrice to his Benedick, on the night when he bade adieu to his profession. That I, who had hitherto acted only the young tragic heroines, was to be thus transported out of my natural sphere into the strange world of high comedy, was a surprise indeed. To consent seemed to me nothing short of presumption. I urged upon Mr Kemble how utterly unqualified I was for such a venture. His answer was, “I have watched you in the second act of *Julia* in ‘*The Hunchback*,’ and I know that you will by-and-by be able to act Shakespeare’s comedy. I do not mean ‘now,’ because more years, greater practice, greater confidence in yourself, must come before you will have sufficient ease. But do not be afraid. I am too much your friend to ask you to do anything that would be likely to prove a failure.” This he followed up by offering to teach me “the business” of the scene. What could I do? He had, from my earliest rehearsals, been uniformly kind, helpful, and encouraging—how could I say him “Nay”? My friends too, who of course acted for me, as I was under age, considered that I must consent. I was amazed at some of the odd things I had to say,—not at all from knowing their meaning, but simply because I did not even surmise it. My dear home instructor, of whom I have often spoken in these letters, said, “My child, you will do this very well. Only give way to natural joyousness. Have no fear. Let yourself

go free ; you cannot be vulgar, if you tried ever so hard."

And so the performance came, and went off more easily than I had imagined,—as so many dreaded events of our lives do pass away, without any of the terrible things happening which we have tormented ourselves by anticipating. The night was one not readily to be forgotten. The excitement of having to act a character so different from any I had hitherto attempted, and the anxiety natural to the effort, filled my mind entirely. I had no idea of the scene which was to follow the close of the comedy, so that it came upon me quite unexpectedly.

The "farewell" of a great actor to the arena of his triumphs was something my imagination had never pictured, and all at once it was brought most impressively before me, touching a deep sad minor chord in my young life. It moved me deeply. As I write, the exciting scene comes vividly before me,—the crowded stage, the pressing forward of all who had been Mr Kemble's comrades and contemporaries,—the good wishes, the farewells given, the tearful voices, the wet eyes, the curtain raised again and again. Ah, how can any one support such a trial? I determined in that moment that, when my time came to leave the stage, I would not leave it in this way. My heart could never have borne such a strain. I need not say that this resolve has remained unchanged. I could not have expected such a demonstrative farewell ; but, whatever it might have been, the certainty that it is the

last time one does anything is, I think, well kept from us. I see now the actors in the play asking for a remembrance of the night,—gloves, handkerchiefs, feathers, one by one taken from the hat, then the hat itself,—all, in short, that could be severed from the dress. I, whose claim was as nothing compared to that of others, stood aside, greatly moved and sorrowful, weeping on my mother's shoulder, when, as the exciting scene was at last drawing to a close, Mr Kemble saw me, and exclaimed, "What! My Lady baby! Beatrice all in tears! What shall I do to comfort her! What can I give her in remembrance of her first Benedick?" I sobbed out, "Give me the book you studied Benedick from." He answered, "You shall have it, and many others!" He kept his word, and I have still two small volumes in which are collected many of the plays in which he acted, and also some in which his daughter, Fanny Kemble, who was then married and living in America, had acted. These came with a charming letter on the title-page addressed to his "dear little friend."

He also told my mother to bring me to him, if at any time she thought his advice might be valuable ; and on several occasions afterwards he took the trouble of reading over new parts with me, and giving me his advice and help. One thing which he impressed upon me I never forgot. It was, on no account to give prominence to the physical aspect of any painful emotion. Let the expression be genuine, earnest, but not ugly. He pointed out to me how easy

¹ I must explain that "baby" was the pet name by which Mr Kemble always called me. I cannot tell why, unless it were because of the contrast he found between his own wide knowledge of the world and of art, and my innocent ignorance and youth. Delicate health had kept me in a quiet home, which I only left at intervals for a quieter life by the sea-side, so that I knew far less of the world and its ways than even most girls of my age.

it was to simulate distortions,—to writhe, for example, from the supposed effect of poison, to gasp, to roll the eyes, &c. These were melodramatic effects. But if pain or death had to be simulated, or any sudden or violent shock, let them be shown, he said, in their mental rather than in their physical signs. The picture presented might be as sombre as the darkest Rembrandt; but it must be noble in its outlines, truthful, picturesque, but never repulsive, mean, or commonplace. It must suggest the heroic, the divine in human nature, and not the mere everyday struggles or tortures of this life, whether in joy or sorrow, despair or hopeless grief. Under every circumstance the graceful, the ideal, the beautiful, should be given side by side with the real.

I have always felt what a happy circumstance it was for a shy and sensitive temperament like mine, that my first steps in my art should have been guided and encouraged by a nature so generous and sympathetic as Mr Kemble's. He made me feel that I was in the right road to success, and gave me courage by speaking warmly of my natural gifts of voice, &c., and praising my desire to study and improve, and my readiness in seizing his meaning and profiting by his suggestions. How different it was when, shortly afterwards, I came under Mr Macready's influence! Equally great in their art, Nature had cast the men in entirely different moulds. Each helped me, but by processes wholly unlike. The one, while pointing out what was wrong, brought the balm of encouragement and hope; the other, like the surgeon who "cuts beyond the wound to make the cure more certain," was merciless to the feelings, where he thought a fault or a defect might so best be pruned

away. Both were my true friends, and were most kind to me, each in his own way of showing kindness. Yet it was well for my self-distrustful nature that the gentler kindness came first.

Mr Kemble never lost an opportunity of making you happy. When Joanna Baillie's play, "*The Separation*," was produced within two months of my first appearance, I had, in the heroine Margaret, a very difficult part—quite unlike any I had previously acted or even studied. The story turns upon a wife's hearing that before their marriage her husband had murdered her brother. The play opens with the wife learning the terrible truth, just as the tidings reach her that her husband has returned safely from battle, and is close at hand. Of course "the separation" ensues. It must have been a great trouble to Mr Kemble, who played Garcio, the husband, to study a new part at that period of his career, and I wonder that he undertook it. You may imagine how nervous and anxious I was at attempting the leading character in a play never before acted, and one, moreover, with which I had little sympathy. During the first performance Mr Kemble also appeared very nervous, and at times seemed at a loss for his words. He was deaf, too,—not very deaf, but sufficiently so to make the prompter's voice of no use to him. Happily I was able on several occasions, being close to him, to whisper the words. How I knew them I can hardly tell, because we had not copies of the play to study from, but only our own manuscript parts. But I had heard him repeat them at rehearsal, and they had fixed themselves in my memory. Naturally I thought nothing of this at the time. The next morning,

when we met upon the stage to make some little changes in the play, Mr Kemble spoke openly of the help I had been to him, making very much more of it than it deserved, and above all, marvelling at the self-command of the little novice, coming with so much readiness to support an old actor, who should have been on the look-out to do that office for her. I was much ashamed to be praised for so small a thing. But how quietly glad was the little mouse when she found that she had helped, ever so slightly, her good friend the noble lion!

Mr Kemble seemed to my eyes before everything pre-eminently a gentleman. And this told, as it always must tell, when he enacted ideal characters. There was a natural grace and dignity in his bearing, a courtesy and unstudied deference of manner in approaching and addressing women, whether in private society or on the stage, which I have scarcely seen equalled. Perhaps it was not quite as rare in his day as it is now. What a lover he must have made! What a Romeo! What an Orlando! I got glimpses of what these must have been in the readings which Mr Kemble gave after he left the stage, and which I attended diligently, with heart and brain awake to profit by what

I heard. How fine was his Mercutio? What brilliancy, what ease, what spontaneous flow of fancy in the Queen Mab speech! The very start of it was suggestive—"Oh, then, I see Queen Mab" (with an emphasis on "Mab") "hath been with you!" How exquisite was the play of it all, image rising up after image, and crowding one upon another, each new one more fanciful than the last! "Thou talk'st of nothing," says Romeo; but oh, what nothings! As picture after picture was brought before you by Mr Kemble's skill, with the just emphasis thrown on every word, yet all spoken "trippingly on the tongue," what objects that one might see or touch could be more real? I was disappointed in his reading of Juliet, Desdemona, &c. His heroines were spiritless, tearful, creatures too merely tender, without distinction or individuality, all except Lady Macbeth, into whom I could not help thinking some of the spirit of his great sister, Mrs Siddons, was transfused. But, in truth, I cannot think it possible for any man's nature to simulate a woman's, or *vice versa*. Therefore it is that I have never cared very much to listen to "readings" of entire plays by any single person. I have sometimes given them myself; but only, like Beatrice, "upon great persuasion."

¹ I shall never forget my surprise, when one day, during the run of "Separation," on going into the Soho Bazaar, and coming to the doll-stall—a not-forgotten spot of interest for me—I saw myself in a doll, labelled "Miss Helen Faucit as the Lady Margaret in 'Separation.'" Such things were very unusual then, and I felt just a little—not proud, but happy. The doll's dress was exactly mine—copied most accurately. I am sure, had I not thought it vain, I should have liked to buy my doll-self. But again, perhaps my funds might not have allowed it, and I felt too shy to ask the price: it was a grandly got up lady, and although my salary was the largest ever given in those days, I was, as a minor, only allowed by my friends a slight increase to the pocket-money which had been mine before. Happily for me, both then and since, money has ever been a matter of slight importance in my regard. Success in my art, and the preservation of the freshness and freedom of spirit which are essential to true distinction, were always my first thought.

in this digression. It was my way to live with the *as I represented*, that when I went to write, my mind wandered off into things unconnected with the representation of them. It was a time before I again performed *Beatrice*, and then I had *Benedick* Mr James Wallace was by that time past the meridian of his life; but he put spirit and grace into the part, added to his fine figure a pleasant bearing, made him, Mr Charles Kemble, appear far beneath him, the best of whom I have ever seen. Something of the fire, the youthfulness of spirit, and the fine courtesy of which made the acting of actors of this type delightful! At a time I had made a great deal of the play; moved more in my art, and was therefore able to throw myself into the character of *Beatrice* more fully than in the days of my youth. The oftener I played it, the more the character grew upon me. The view I had taken of it was also to find favour with my friends. I well remember the first time I felt, when some chance spoke of my *Beatrice*, that it was "a creature overflowing with youthfulness,—raillery itself, and her nothing more than an animal spirit, tempered with a soul of good-ness. That she had a soul, brave and generous as well as good, it was my aim to show. All I could do was easy work to me on the stage. To do it with my pen is a harder task; but I must try. It may be a mere fancy, but I help myself by thinking that Shakespeare found peculiar pleasure in the representation of *Beatrice*, and especially in devising the en-

counters between her and *Benedick*. You remember what old Fuller says of the wit combats between Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, in which he likens Jonson to a Spanish galleon, "built high, solid, but slow;" and Shakespeare to an English man-of-war, "lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, tacking about, and taking advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention." It is just this quickness of wit and invention which is the special characteristic of both *Benedick* and *Beatrice*. In their skirmishes, each vies with each in trying to outflank the other by jest and repartee; and, as is fitting, the victory is generally with the lady, whose adroitness in "tacking about, and taking advantage of all winds," gives her the advantage even against an adversary so formidable as *Benedick*.

That *Beatrice* is beautiful, Shakespeare is at pains to indicate. If what Wordsworth says was ever true of any one, assuredly it was true of her, that

"Vital feelings of delight
Had reared her form to stately height."

Accordingly we picture her as tall, and with the lithe elastic grace of motion which should come of a fine figure and high health. We are very early made to see that she is the sunshine of her uncle Leonato's house. He delights in her quaint, daring way of looking at things; he is proud of her, too, for with all her sportive and somewhat domineering ways, she is every inch the noble lady, bearing herself in a manner worthy of her high blood and courtly breeding. He knows how good and sound she is in heart no less than in head,—one of those strong natures which can be counted on to rise up in answer to a call upon their courage and fertility of resource in any time of

difficulty or trouble. Her shrewd, sharp sayings have only a pleasant piquancy for him. Indeed, however much weak colourless natures might stand in awe of eyes so quick to detect a flaw, and a wit so prompt to cover it with ridicule, there must have been a charm for him and for all manly natures in the very peril of coming under the fire of her raillery. A young, beautiful, graceful woman, flashing out brilliant sayings, charged with no real malice, but with just enough of a sting in them to pique the self-esteem of those at whom they are aimed, must always, I fancy, have a peculiar fascination for men of spirit. And so we see at the very outset it was with Beatrice. Not only her uncle, but also Don Pedro, and the Count Claudio, have the highest admiration of her. That she was either a vixen or a shrew was the last idea that would have entered their minds. "By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady!" says Don Pedro; and the words express what was obviously the general impression of all who knew her best.

How long Benedick and Beatrice have known each other before the play begins is not indicated. I think we may fairly infer that their acquaintance is of some standing. It certainly did not begin when Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon, in passing through Messina, on the way probably to attack the Turks, with whom Spain, Austria, and Venice were at war about the period to which we may reasonably assign the action of the play, picked Benedick up, and attached him to his suite. They were obviously intimate before this. At all events, there had been time for an antagonism to spring up between them, which was natural where both were witty, and both accustomed to lord it somewhat, as witty

people are apt to do, over their respective circles. Benedick could scarcely have failed to have drawn the fire of Beatrice by his avowed and contemptuous indifference to her sex, if by nothing else. To be evermore proclaiming, as we may be sure he did, just as much before he went to the wars as he did after his return, that he rated all women cheaply, was an offence which Beatrice, ready enough although she might be herself to make epigrams on the failings of her sex, was certain to resent. Was it to be borne that he should set himself up as "a professed tyrant to her whole sex," and boast his freedom from the vassalage to "love, the lord of all"? And this, too, when he had the effrontery to tell herself, "It is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted."

It is true that Beatrice, when she is pressed upon the point, has much the same pronounced notions about the male sex, and the bondage of marriage. But she does not, like Benedick, go about proclaiming them to all comers; neither does she denounce the whole male sex for the faults or vices of the few. Besides, there has clearly been about Benedick, in these early days, an air of confident self-assertion, a tendency to talk people down, which have irritated Beatrice. The name, "Signor Montanto," borrowed from the language of the Italian fencing-school, by which she asks after him in the first sentence she utters, and her announcement that she had promised to "eat all of his killing," seem to point to the first of these faults. And may we not take, as an indication of the other, her first remark to himself, "I wonder you will still be talking, Signor Benedick; nobody marks you:" and also the sarcasm in her description of him to her uncle, as

"too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling"?

What piques Beatrice is the undeniable fact that Benedick is a handsome, gallant young fellow, a general favourite, who makes his points with trenchant effect in the give and take of their wit-combats, and, in short, has more of the qualities to win the heart of a woman of spirit, than any of the gallants who have come about her. She, on the other hand, has the attraction for him of being as clever as she is handsome,—the person of all his circle who puts him most upon his mettle, and who pays him the compliment of replying upon his sharp sayings with repartees, the brilliancy of which he cannot but acknowledge, even while he smarts under them. He is, besides, far from insensible to her beauty, as we see by what he says of her to Claudio when contrasting her with Hero. "There is her cousin, and she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December." No wonder, therefore, that, as we see, they have often come into contact, creating no small amusement to their friends, and to none more than to Leonato. When Beatrice, in the opening scene of the play, says so many biting things about Benedick, Leonato, anxious that the Messenger shall not carry away a false opinion of him says, "You must not, sir, mistake my niece; there is a kind of merry war between Signor Benedick and her; they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them." Life, perhaps, has not been so amusing to Leonato since Signor Benedick went away. It is conceivable that Beatrice herself may have missed

him, if for nothing else than for the jibes and sarcasms which had called her own exuberance of wit into play.

We shall not, I believe, do her justice unless we form some idea, such as I have indicated, of the relations that have subsisted between her and Benedick before the play opens. It would be impossible otherwise to understand why he should be uppermost in her thoughts when she hears of the successful issue of Don Pedro's expedition, so that her first question to the Messenger who brings the tidings is whether Benedick has come back with the rest. Finding that he has, unscathed "and as pleasant as ever he was," she proceeds to show him under no very flattering aspect. Her uncle, knowing how very different Benedick is from the man she describes, tries to stop her by saying, "Faith, niece, you tax Signor Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt not." This only stimulates her to such further travesty of his character, that the Messenger observes, "I see, lady, that the gentleman is not in your books." In sheer enjoyment of her own humour, she rejoins—"No: and he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you," she continues, insensibly betraying her interest in him by the question, "who is his companion?" And when the Messenger answers, "The right noble Claudio," the humorous exaggeration of her language gives a delightful foretaste of what we may expect when she encounters Benedick himself:—

"O Lord! He will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. Heaven help the noble Claudio!" If he have

¹ In some recent reproductions of Shakespeare's plays, the frequent repetition of the name of the Deity has struck most painfully upon my ear. I suppose

caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cured.

Mess. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You'll ne'er run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January."

At this point Don Pedro enters with his suite, and Benedick among them. It is not long before he draws upon himself, and deservedly too, a shaft from the quiver of Beatrice's wit. When Don Pedro, turning to Hero, says, "I think this is your daughter," and Leonato rejoins, "Her mother hath many times told me so," Benedick strikes in with the somewhat impertinent freedom of a privileged jester, "Were you in doubt, Signor, that you asked her?" Leonato retorts upon him, "Signor Benedick, no; for then were you a child." "You have it full, Benedick," exclaims Don Pedro; "we may guess by this what you are, being a man,"—adding, "Truly, the lady father's herself; be happy, lady! for you are like an honourable father." Benedick, a little stung by Leonato's repartee, now grows rude. "If Signor Leonato," he says, "be her father, she would not have his head upon her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is." The others turn away to converse, but Beatrice, indignant at what she considers his impertinent speech to her uncle, addresses him tauntingly with—

"I wonder you will still be talk-

ing, Signor Benedick; nobody marks you.

Bene. What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signor Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain if you come in her presence."

In the dialogue which ensues Benedick falls at once into his old habit of boasting that women love him, but that he does not love them. In what he says, he is unmannerly rather than witty; and finding very soon that he has the worst of the encounter, he is glad to break off the interview, telling Beatrice, "I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, o' God's name; I have done." She is ready with her retort—"You always end with a jade's trick; I know you of old."

When Beatrice leaves the scene, and Benedick remains behind with Claudio, he can give full vent to his disparagement of all woman-kind with no fear of rebuke. In vain does Claudio try to extract from him some encouragement in his admiration of Leonato's daughter Hero. "In mine eyes," says Claudio, "she is the sweetest lady ever I looked on." But Benedick can "see no such matter." Then it is he drops out the acknowledgment, that Beatrice excels her cousin in beauty as "the first of May doth the last of December," if only she were not "possessed

when Shakespeare wrote, the lax use of this sacred name, like many other things repugnant to modern taste, was thought nothing of. In this play the name of "God" occurs continually, and upon the most trivial occasions. It so happens that it rises to Beatrice's lips more often than to any other's. In the books from which I studied, "Heaven" was everywhere substituted for it; and I confess the word sounds pleasanter and softer to my ear, besides being in the circumstances less irreverent. I cannot help the feeling, though it may be thought fastidious. It is a word that should never rise lightly to the lips, or be used upon slight cause. There are, of course, occasions when, even upon the stage, it is the right word to use. But these are rare, and only where the prevailing strain of thought or emotion is high and solemn.

with a fury"—a qualification made in very soreness at the triumph of her superior skill, in the carte and tierce of badinage, has so recently given her over him. Claudio, who on seeing Hero again, finds that the admiration he had felt for her before going to the war has deepened into an absorbing passion, writhes under the banter of his unsympathetic friend, and is very glad to have the support of Don Pedro, who now joins them. His coming is the signal for Benedick to start off afresh into protestations of his indifference to the whole female sex, and of his fixed determination to live a bachelor. When Don Pedro, who knows human nature a great deal too well to take such protestations for serious earnest, says, "I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love," Benedick rejoins, "With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, but not with love." Don Pedro adheres to his opinion, quoting the line, "In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke;" and this draws from Benedick the protest, on which so much of the humour of what happens afterwards depends,—

Bene. The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead: and let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write, 'Here is good horse to hire,' let them signify under my sign, 'Here you may see Benedick the married man.'

D. Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too, then."

Benedick gone, Claudio is free to open the state of his heart to his patron and friend, Don Pedro. He fears his liking may seem too sudden, and explains that it was of old standing. Before he had gone

with the Prince on the expedition just ended, he had looked on Hero—

"With a soldier's eye,
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love.
But now I am returned, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I liked her ere I went to wars."

This being the state of his heart, why should he not have urged his suit in person? Instead of doing so, however, he at once adopts Don Pedro's suggestion, that she should be wooed by proxy:—

"I know we shall have revelling to night;
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio;
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale."

Brides for princes have often been wooed by proxy, and with results not always satisfactory to the princes, but here the order of things is reversed. Surely the man who could leave another to plead for him in such a cause, can have no great strength of character; and that this is true of Claudio, seems to me to be very clearly shown by his subsequent conduct. Presently we see how easily he allows himself to be swayed, as weak men will, by what other people say, when Don Pedro's brother, Don John, to gratify the personal grudge he feels for having been supplanted by Claudio in his brother's regard, persuades him that Don Pedro is playing him false, and wooing Hero for himself.

The discovery that this was merely a malicious fiction would have put most men upon their guard against believing any further innuendo from the same quarter. But Claudio is ready to give credence to Don John's subsequent accusation against Hero, and to jump to the conclusion that it is true, upon evidence which could have misled no manly and generous mind. The very look, morose and vindictive, of Don John, ought to have inspired him with distrust. What that look was Beatrice puts vividly before us in a sentence or two at the opening of the Second Act. The whole passage is delightful.

"*Leonato.* Was not Count John here at supper?"

Antonio. I saw him not.

Beatrice. How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him, but I am heart-burned an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick: the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then half Signor Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signor Benedick's face—

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man could win any woman in the world,—if he could get her good-will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of tongue.

Beat. . . . For the which blessing I am upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face. . . .

Leon. You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? Dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth; and he that hath no beard is

less than a man; and he that is more than a youth is not for me, and he that is less than a man, I am not for him."

Who does not see what a pleasant person Beatrice must have been in her uncle's home, with all this power of saying the quaint and unexpected things which bubble up from an uncontrollable spirit of enjoyment? Her frankness must indeed have been a pleasant foil to the somewhat characterless and over-gentle Hero. See how fearlessly she presently tells Hero not to take a husband of her father's choosing, unless he pleases herself. She has just heard of the Prince's intention to make suit to Hero at the coming masked ball, and when Antonio tells Hero that he trusts she will not follow Beatrice's creed, but "be ruled by her father," Beatrice rejoins—

"Yes, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make curtesy, and say, 'As it pleases you:—'but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtesy, and say, 'Father, as it pleases me!'"

Leonato loves Beatrice too well to be angry at this instigation to possible rebellion, and only answers her with the words, "Well, niece, I hope to see *you* one day fitted with a husband." Beatrice is by no means at the end of her resources. She is bent on making light of all matrimonial projects. In what she goes on to say we have the counterpart of what Benedick, in the previous scene, had said to Don Pedro and Claudio; and so the groundwork is laid for the coming contrast between their protestations of resolute celibacy and their subsequent engagement.

"*Beat.* Not till Heaven make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a piece of valiant dust! To make account of her life

to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none. Adam's sons are my brethren; and truly I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you. If the Prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time. If the Prince be too importunate, tell him there is measure in everything, and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero; wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace. The first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly-modest, full of state and ancientry; and then comes repentance, and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle: I can see a church by daylight."

Beatrice is now in the gayest spirits, and in the very mood to encounter her old enemy, Benedick. He appears forthwith at the revel at Leonato's house, masked like the other guests. Benedick has thrown himself in her way; he has danced with her; and thinking she does not penetrate the disguise of his domino and mask, has been telling her he had been informed that her wit was borrowed and her temper disdainful. She knows him at once, but affects not to do so; so that in the dialogue between them, the actress has the most delightful scope for bringing out the address, the graceful movement, the abounding joyousness which make Beatrice the paragon of her kind. With a plaintive, ill-used air, she asks him—

"*Beat.* Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. (in a feigned voice). No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful,—and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales.'"

Then, as if the truth had just flashed upon her, she continues—

"Well, this was Signor Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you, what is he?"

By this time Benedick has begun to wish himself anywhere but where he is. But his restlessness only stimulates Beatrice to take her full revenge upon him by presenting him in the light which, to a high-spirited man, would be intolerable. Never again shall he venture to say she had her wit out of 'The Hundred Merry Tales.'

"*Beat.* Why, he is the Prince's jester: a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders. None but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit but in his villainy; for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. . . ."

Benedick tries to break away from her, saying, "When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say;" but he is not allowed to escape.

"Do, do!" says Beatrice, mocking him. "He'll but break a comparison or two on me; which, peradventure, not marked, or not laughed at strikes him into melancholy; and then there's a partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night."

With this Beatrice lets him go; but how deeply her barbed shafts have pierced him is seen anon, when he returns to the scene. He has been laughing at Claudio for, as he believes, letting Don Pedro win his mistress Hero for himself,

but no sooner does Claudio leave him, than the jibes of Lady Beatrice recur to his memory : —

"That my lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me ! The Prince's fool ! Ha ! it may be, that I go under that title, because I am merry. Yea, so ; I am apt to do myself wrong. I am not so reputed. It is nought but the bitter disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may."

"As he may !" There is an amusing despair in the confession. He feels that Beatrice has fairly driven him off the field. This becomes more apparent when Don Pedro breaks in upon his musing with these unwelcome words, "The lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you ; the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you." Poor Benedick at once lets out the secret, which Beatrice had kept from the Prince, that the gentleman in question was himself. Indignation makes him eloquent and witty even beyond his wont.

"Oh, she misused me past the endurance of a block. An oak, but with one green leaf on it, would have answered her. My very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself,"—ah, where was then his vaunted shrewdness?—"that I was the Prince's jester, and that I was duller than a great thaw, huddling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs. . . . I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed."

Not marry her ! Are we to read in this, that Benedick had at some time nourished dreams about her, not wholly consistent with his creed of celibacy ? Not unlikely, if we couple this remark with what

he had said to Claudio about her beauty as compared with Hero's. But, while they speak, Beatrice is seen approaching with her Uncle, Claudio, and Hero, and, in the same spirit of exquisite exaggeration, Benedick, who in his present mood will not run the risk of a fresh encounter, asks Don Pedro if he will not "command him any service to the world's end ?" offering to go anywhere, do anything, "rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy," and makes his escape, exclaiming as he goes, "O God, sir, here's a dish I love not ; I cannot endure my Lady Tongue." All this time Benedick quite forgets that he has himself to blame if Beatrice has dealt sharply with him ; for had he not given her the severest provocation by attacking her under the shelter of his mask ? If volubility of speech were her sin, how much greater is his ? Rich as her invention is, and fertile her vocabulary, Benedick excels her in both. But what great talker ever knew his own weakness ?

Meanwhile Beatrice has been requested by Don Pedro to bring Count Claudio. She has evidently found out, by the way, the secret of his sullenness ; and when Don Pedro inquires the cause, she puts the case with her usual aptness and pleasantry, "The Count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well : but civil, Count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion." He is speedily disabused of his suspicions, and made happy by Don Pedro's assurance that Hero has been won for him, and her father's "goodwill obtained."

Despite of all that she has said against marriage for herself, Beatrice, who is in Hero's secret, is glad of a result which makes her cousin happy. "Speak, Count,"

she says to Claudio, who has scarcely recovered from his surprise ; " 'tis your cue." And when he does speak, and very well too, she turns with a similar adjuration to the blushing Hero.

"*Beat.* Speak, cousin ; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let him not speak neither.

D. Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord : I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care."

But she is for the moment too intent on watching the lovers to think of herself, and she continues—

"My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good Lord ! for alliance ! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburnt ; I may sit in a corner, and cry, heigho ! for a husband.

D. Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you ? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

D. Pedro. Will you have me, lady ?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days. Your grace is too costly to wear every day."

Here, true lady as she is, it crosses her mind that her high spirits may have carried her too far, and may lead the Prince to misunderstand her. With the bright and innocent frankness which obviously gives her a special charm in his eyes, she prays his forgiveness.

"I beseech your grace, pardon me ! I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.

D. Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you ; for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour."

With just the slightest inflection

of pathos in her voice, Beatrice replies—

"No, sure, my lord, my mother cry'd ; but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born. Cousins, Heaven give you joy !"

Her uncle now asks her "to look to some things he had told her of." Be sure she was the presiding spirit in his household. How sweetly and prettily does she go upon his bidding ! "I cry you mercy, uncle ;" then curtseying to the Prince of Arragon, "By your grace's leave !" to excuse herself for leaving thus abruptly. When she has gone, Don Pedro sums up his impression of her in the words, "By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady." In answer to his remark that Beatrice "cannot endure to hear tell of a husband," Leonato answers, "Oh, by no means : she mocks all her wooers out of suit !" Don Pedro has, however, seen enough of the relations between her and Benedick to conclude that a worse thing might befall them, than that their witty warfare should be turned to wooing. He has obviously a strong regard for both, and he "would fain have it a match." She, he says, "were an excellent wife for Benedick ;" and Benedick, a man "of noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed honesty," as he knows him to be, is "not the unhopefullest husband that he knows." So, to beguile the week that is to elapse before Claudio's marriage, he undertakes "to bring them into a mountain of affection, the one with the other." Hero, acting upon the suggestions Don Pedro will give her, is so to "humour" her cousin, "that she shall fall in love with Benedick ;" while he himself, along with Leonato and Claudio, are so to "practise on Benedick, that, in despite of his quick wit

and his queasy stomach," he shall fall in love with Beatrice.

While they are perfecting their little well-meant plot, Don John and his retainer, Borachio, are hatching theirs for destroying Hero's reputation, and breaking off her marriage, by making Don Pedro and Count Claudio believe that, on the night before her wedding-day, they see Borachio leave her chamber by the window. The way in which the temporary success of this second plot is made to work most effectually for the permanent success of the first, is one of the many proofs of Shakespeare's transcendent skill in dramatic construction.

There is no need to speak at length of the admirable scene in which Don Pedro, Leonato, and Count Claudio persuade Benedick that Beatrice dotes upon him, while "she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor him," and "will die ere she will make her love known." So cleverly is the dialogue managed, that Benedick must have had a heart of stone, as well as superhuman acuteness, had he not been moved by it. He does not easily fall into the snare. Don Pedro alone could not have deceived him. But how can he refuse to believe Leonato, "the white-bearded fellow," whom he knows to be devoted to Beatrice? Was it conceivable that he, her uncle and guardian, should be speaking pure fiction, when he says that "she loves Benedick with an enraged affection,—it is past the infinite of thought"? And why should Claudio, his own familiar and trusted friend, be in the same tale, unless he had really learned from Hero, as he says he has, the true state of Beatrice's affection, and "that she will die ere she make her love known?"

The conspirators have not spared Benedick, while extolling Beatrice—dwelling much on his scornful and contemptuous spirit,—and Don Pedro, at the same time that he protests he "loves him well," adding very craftily a wish, that Benedick "would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy to have so good a lady." Benedick's first thought is not of his own shortcomings. In this, as we presently see, he is very different from Beatrice. He at once, with pardonable complacency accepts the fact that Beatrice loves him: in that belief all his former invectives against her are forgotten, and he feels her love "must be requited." She is no longer "Lady Disdain" "the fury," "the harpy." On the contrary, she is "fair," "virtuous," "wise, but in loving him." In any case he "will be horribly in love with her;" and so possessed is he with the triumphant feeling that he stands high in her regard, that when she presently appears to tell him she is "sent against her will to bid him come in to dinner," he actually "spies some marks of love in her," and finds a meaning flattering to the thought in the very phrases which she studiously uses to prove with what reluctance she had come upon the errand. He leaves the scene, protesting, "I will go get her picture!"

Now it is Beatrice's turn to fall into a similar snare. It is laid for her by Hero and her gentlewoman Ursula; and in the very exuberance of a power that runs without effort into the channel of melodious verse, Shakespeare passes from the terse vivid prose of the previous scene into rhythmical lines, steeped in music and illuminated by fancy. Margaret is dispatched to tell Beatrice that her cousin

and Ursula are talking about her,
and to

"Bid her steal into the pleachèd
bower,
Where honeysuckles, ripened by the
sun,
Forbid the sun to enter."

And anon we see her

"Like a lapwing, run
Close by the ground, to hear their con-
ference."

It is of course an overwhelming
surprise to Beatrice to hear that
"Benedick loves her so entirely."
She is at first incredulous. Still
her attention is fairly arrested.
She listens with eager curiosity ;
but begins to feel a tightening at
the heart when her cousin says—

"But Nature never framed a woman's
heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice:
Dadain and scorn ride sparkling in her
eyes,
Misprising what they look on ; and her
wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak. She can-
not love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affec-
tion,
She is so self-endear'd.

Urs. Sure, I think so ;
And therefore, certainly, it were not
good
She knew his love, lest she make sport
of it."

Hero, with a power of witty and
somewhat merciless sarcasm, new
to Beatrice in her gentle cousin,
drives still further home the charge
of pride and scornfulness :—

"Why, you speak truth : I never yet
saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rare-
ly featured,
But she would spell him backward : if
fair-faced,
She'd swear the gentleman should be
her sister ;
If black, why nature, drawing of an
antic,

Made a foul blot ; if tall, a lance ill-
headed ;

If low, an agate very vilely cut ;
If speaking, why, a vane blown with
all winds,

If silent, why, a block movèd with
none."

All this makes Beatrice smile, for
it reminds her of her own thoughts
about some of her unsuccessful
woers. But what follows sends
the blood in upon her heart :—

"So turns she every man the wrong
side out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchas-
eth."

Why, why, if this be so, has not
Hero let her hear of it from her-
self ? The feeling of shame and bit-
ter self-reproach deepens as Hero
goes on :—

"To be so odd, and from all fash-
ions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable:
But who dare tell her so ? If I should
speak,
She would mock me into air : oh, she
would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with
wit.
Therefore let Benedick, like covered fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly—
It were a better death than die with
mocks."

We know that all this is over-
stated for a purpose. But Beat-
rice has no such suspicion. She is
wounded to the quick, and Hero's
words strike deeper, because Beat-
rice has up to this time seen no
signs that her cousin had enter-
tained this harsh view of her char-
acter. The cup of self-reproach is
full, as Hero proceeds :—

"No, I will rather go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his
passion.
And, truly, I'll devise some honest
slanders
To stain my cousin with : one doth not
know
How much an ill word doth empoison
liking."

This was too much, and it seemed to me, as I heard it, as if I could endure no more, but must break from my concealment and stop their cruel words. Ursula's more kindly rejoinder is some balm to Beatrice—

"Oh, do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
(Having so swift and excellent a wit
As she is prized to have) as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Signor Benedick."

What follows is not unwelcome to her ears, for it is all in praise of Benedick as one who—

"For shape, for bearing, argument, and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy."

When they are gone, and Beatrice comes from her hiding-place in "the pleached bower," she has become to herself another woman. It is not so much that her nature is changed, as that it has been suddenly developed. She is dazed, astounded at what she has overheard. "What fire is in mine ears?" she exclaims; "Can this be true!" Am I such a self-assured, scornful, disdainful, vainglorious creature? Is it thus I appear even to those who know me best, and whom I love the best? Do I look down contemptuously on others from the height of my own deserts? Am I so "self-endear'd" that I see worth and cleverness only in myself? Do I carry myself thus proudly? Have I been living in a delusion? Have my foolish tongue and giddy humour presented me in a light so untrue to my real self? What an awakening! She does not think of others. She feels no shade of bitterness against Hero,—her reproaches are all against herself. "Stand I condemned for pride and

scorn so much?" There must be an end to this, and quickly.

"Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride,
adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such."

After this complete self-abasement comes fresh wonder, in the remembrance of what Hero and Ursula have said of Benedick's infatuation for her. That he likes her, she has probably suspected more than once; and now she learns that it is her wicked mocking spirit which has alone prevented him from making open avowal of his devotion. All this shall be changed. If, despite the past, he indeed loves her, he must be rewarded. No one knows his good qualities better than she. She will accept his shortcomings—for what grave faults of her own has she not to correct?—and for the future touch them so gently, that in time either they will vanish, or she will hardly wish them away. Henceforth she must give him such encouragement as will make him happy in the avowal of his love.

"So, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To tie our loves up in a holy band:
For others say thou dost deserve;
and I
Believe it better than reportingly."

This is the point in the play in which the underlying nobleness and generosity of Beatrice leap into view. If she were indeed what Hero described—still more, if this were, as Hero had said, the general impression—she might well be excused, had she asked why Hero, her bosom friend, her "bed-fellow," as we are subsequently

told, had never hinted at faults so serious? But Beatrice neither reproaches her cousin, nor seeks to extenuate the defects laid to her charge. She trusts Hero implicitly, and being herself incapable of deceit or misrepresentation, she regards Hero's heavy indictment as a thing not to be impugned. The future, she resolves, shall make it impossible for any one to entertain such a conception of her as Hero has described.

This is the turning-point in Beatrice's life; and in the representation it should be shown by her whole demeanour, and especially by the way the lines just quoted are spoken, that a marked change has come over her since, "like a lapwing," she stole into the bower of honeysuckles. Thus the audience will be prepared for the development of the high qualities which she soon afterwards displays.

She is then one of the brilliant group that accompanies Hero to the altar. When Claudio brings forward his accusation against his bride, Beatrice is struck dumb with amazement. Indignation at the falsehood of the charge, and at the unmanliness that could wait for such a moment to make it, is mingled with the keenest sympathy for Leonato as well as for Hero. I never knew exactly for which of the two my sympathy should most be shown, and I found myself by the side now of the one, now of the other. Hero had her friends, her attendants round her; but her kind uncle and guardian stands alone. Strangely enough, his brother Antonio, who plays a prominent part afterwards, is not at the wedding.

Beatrice's blood is all on fire at the disgrace thus brought upon her family and herself. When she hears the vile slander supported

by Don Pedro; and when Don John, that sour-visaged hypocrite whom she dislikes by instinct, with insolent audacity throws fresh reproaches upon the fainting Hero, her eye falls on Benedick, who stands apart bewildered, looking on the scene with an air of manifest distress. In that moment, as I think, Beatrice makes up her mind that he shall be her cousin's champion. Were she not a woman, she would herself enter the lists to avenge the wrong: since she cannot do this directly, she will do it indirectly by enlisting this new-found lover in her cause. How happy a coincidence it is, that Hero has so lately brought the fact of Benedick's devotion to her knowledge! All remembrance of the harsh, the unkind accusations against herself, with which the information was mixed up, has vanished from her mind. It was Hero who revealed to her the unsuspected love of Benedick,—at least its earnestness and depth,—and Hero shall be the first to benefit by it.

Benedick is so present to her thoughts, that when Hero faints in her arms, she calls to him, as well as to Leonato and the Friar, to come to her assistance. "Help, uncle! Hero! why, Hero! Uncle! Signor Benedick! Friar!" Nor is he unmoved by what he has noted in Beatrice. Her deep emotion has touched him, and he begins to waver in his belief in the charge against Hero, when he hears Beatrice exclaim, with a voice resonant with the energy of assured conviction, "Oh, on my soul, my cousin is belied!" He is not disinclined to accept the Friar's suggestion that "there is some strange misprision in the princes," and his instinct at once leads him to suspect that they have been the dupes of Don John.

"Two of them have the very bent of honour ;
And if their wisdom be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies."

Possessed as Benedick was with this idea of the man, it is obvious that, if his friends had taken him into their counsels, they would never have fallen into Don John's toils. Benedick's words were, no doubt, the echo of Beatrice's own thought. She would be grateful for them, and still more for the tone and manner, so well fitted to raise him in her esteem, of his parting speech to Leonato :—

"Signor Leonato, let the friar advise you :
And though you know my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the Prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body."

What a conflict of strong emotions used to come over me when acting this scene ! It begins solemnly, yet happily ; but oh, how soon all is changed ! One may imagine that to the marriage of the daughter of the Governor of Messina the whole nobility of the place would be invited. Claudio, we have been told, has an uncle living in Messina. He and all Claudio's kinsfolk would be present, and the people of the city would naturally throng to the ceremony. Think what it was for the bride to be brought to shame before such an assemblage,—to be given back into her father's hands, and branded with unchastity ! What consternation to even the mere lookers-on—what dismay to those more directly concerned ! Hero is at first so stunned, so bewildered, so unable to realize what is meant by the accusation, that she cannot speak. When Claudio, assuming

conscious guilt from her silence, went on with his charge, I could hardly keep still. My feet tingled, my eyes flashed lightning upon the princes and Claudio. Oh, that I had been her brother, her male cousin, and not a powerless woman ! How I looked around in quest of help, and gladly saw Benedick standing apart from the rest ! And how shame seemed piled on shame when that hateful Prince John, as he left the scene, said to the victim of his villainy—

"Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment !"

Oh, for a flight of deadly arrows to send after him ! Then Claudio's parting speech, with its flowery sentimentalism, so out of place in one who had played so merciless a part, sickened me with contempt.

How gladly I saw these shallow maligners disappear ! Something must now be learned or done to clear away their slander. I felt with what chagrin Beatrice, when asked, was obliged to confess, that last night she was not by the side of Hero—

"Although, until last night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bed-fellow !"

And yet how simple to myself was the explanation ! Each had to commune with herself—Hero on the serious step she was taking,—a step requiring many orisons to "move the heavens to smile upon her state ;" and Beatrice, to think on what had been revealed to her of her own shortcomings, as well as of Benedick's undreamed-of attachment to herself. At such a time, hours of perfect rest and solitary meditation would be welcome and needful to them both.

But Beatrice is no dreamer. The Friar's plan of giving out that Hero

is dead, and so awakening Claudio's remorse, will not wipe out the wrong done to her cousin or the indignity offered to her kin. Therefore she lets her friends retire, lingering behind, to the surprise, possibly, of some who might expect that she would go with them to comfort Hero. She is bent on finding for her a better comfort than lies in words. Benedick, she feels sure, will remain if she does. And he, how could he do otherwise? This beautiful woman, whom he has hitherto known all joyousness, and seeming indifference to the feelings of others, has revealed herself under a new aspect, and one that has drawn him towards her more than he has ever been drawn towards woman before. He has noted how all through this terrible scene she has been the only one to stand by, to defend, to try to cheer the slandered Hero. Her courage and her tenderness have roused the chivalry of his nature. So deeply is he moved, that I believe, even if he had not previously been influenced by what he had been told of Beatrice's love, he would from that time have been her lover and devoted servant.

There is tenderness in his voice as he accosts her. "Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?" But it is only when she hears him say, "Surely, I do believe your fair cousin is wronged," that she dashes her tears aside, and can give voice to the thought that has for some time been uppermost in her mind.

"Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!"

Bene. Is there any way to show such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours."

These words are not to be in-

terpreted, as by some they have been, as spoken in Beatrice's usually sarcastic vein. She only means that, being neither a kinsman, nor in any way connected with Hero's family, he cannot step forward to do her right. In this sense the words are understood by Benedick, who takes the most direct way of removing the difficulty by the avowal of his love. "I do love nothing in the world so well as you. Is not that strange?" After what she has overheard, this makes her smile, but it causes her no surprise. With the thought of Hero's vindication uppermost in her heart, what can she do but answer Benedick's avowal by her own? And yet to make it is by no means easy, as we see by her words, somewhat in the old vein—

"As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you,—but believe me not" (half-confessing, and then withdrawing); "and yet I lie not" (again yielding and again falling back), "I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing."

To extricate herself from her embarrassment, she turns away from the subject with the words, spoken with tremulous emotion, "I am sorry for my cousin." But Benedick is impatient for a clearer assurance. Observe how skilfully, even while she humours him, she leads him on to the point on which she has set her mind:—

"Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

Beat. Why, then, God forgive me!

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have stayed me in a

happy hour ; I was about to protest I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest."

And now that their mutual confessions have been so wittily and earnestly given, Beatrice recurs to what she has never for a moment forgotten,—the wrongs of her cousin, the outraged honour of the house of which she is herself a scion, the stain on its escutcheon. These must be avenged, and, if Benedick indeed loves her, it must be he who shall stand forth as the avenger,—for, as her accepted lover, that will be his "office." So when he says, "Come, bid me do anything for thee!" in a breath she exclaims, "Kill Claudio!" This demand, spoken with an intensity which leaves no room to doubt that she is thoroughly in earnest, staggers Benedick. Claudio is his chosen friend, they have just gone through the perils of war together, and he replies, "Ha! not for the wide world!" "You kill me to deny; farewell," says Beatrice, and is about to leave him. In vain he importunes her to remain; and now he is made to see indeed the strength and earnestness of her nature. All the pent-up passion that has shaken her during the previous scene, breaks out:—

"*Beat.* In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? Oh, that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour.—O Heaven, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place!

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice;—

Beat. Talk with a man out of a window! A proper saying!

Bene. Nay, but Beatrice;—

Beat. Sweet Hero!—She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

Bene. Beat—

Beat. Princes and Counties! Surely a princely testimony, a good Count-Confect, a sweet gallant surely! Oh, that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongues, and trim ones too. He is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie and swears it! I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving."

In her anger and distress Beatrice will not, cannot listen to what Benedick would say. At last he has a chance, when her tears are streaming, and her invectives are exhausted. "By this hand, I love thee!" he says, and he has been loving her more and more all through her burst of generous and eloquent indignation. "Use it for my love," she replies, still quivering with emotion, "some other way than swearing by it!" Then with all seriousness he asks her, "Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?" As serious and solemn is her answer, "Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul!" His rejoinder is all she could desire—

"Enough, I am engaged; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin. I must say she is dead. And so, farewell."

And so they part, each with a much higher respect for the other than before. Thanks to the poet's skill, the trouble that has fallen on Leonato's house has served to bind them to each other by the strongest tie, and to make their mutual re-

gard and ultimate union only in the very slightest degree dependent on the plot devised by their friends.

It has, I know, been considered a blemish in Beatrice, that at such a moment she should desire to risk her lover's life. How little can those who think so enter into her position, or understand the feelings with which a noble woman would in such circumstances be actuated ! What she would have done herself, had she been a man, to punish the traducer of her kinswoman and bosom friend, and to vindicate the family honour, she has a right to expect her engaged lover will do for her. Her honour as a member of the family is at stake, and what woman of spirit would think so meanly of her lover as to doubt his readiness to risk his life in such a cause ? The days of chivalry were not gone in Shakespeare's time ; neither, I trust and believe, are they gone now. I am confident that all women who are worthy of a brave man's love, will understand and sympathise with the feeling that animated Beatrice. Think of the wrong done to Hero, —the unnecessary aggravation of it in the moment chosen for publishing what Beatrice knows to be a vile slander ! Benedick adopts her conviction, and, having adopted it, the course she urges is the one he must himself have taken. Could he leave it to the only male members of his adopted family, Leonato and Antonio, two elderly men, to champion the kinswoman of the lady of his love ?

The manner in which he bears himself in the scene of his challenge to Count Claudio proves that, under the gaiety of his general demeanour, lies, just as in Beatrice, a high and earnest and generous spirit. In parting from her he had said, "As you hear of me, so think of me." Had she

seen with what dignity and quiet courage he meets the jibes and sarcasms of Don Pedro and Claudio, her heart must have gone out towards him with its inmost warmth. How much it cost him to renounce their friendship is very delicately shown. By the way he has heard that Don John has fled from Messina,—an incident calculated to strengthen his suspicions that it was he who had hatched the plot against Hero. But however this may be, they are not without reproach ; so, turning to Don Pedro, he says :—

"My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you. I must discontinue your company. Your brother, the bastard, is fled from Messina. You have, among you, killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet ; and, till then, peace be with him."

Knowing that Beatrice will be all impatience to learn what has passed between himself and Claudio, Benedick hastens to seek her. He longs to be again with her, for he is by this time "horribly in love," as he said he would be. Not Leander, he tells us, nor Troilus, nor "a whole bookful of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, were ever so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love." When Beatrice hears from Margaret that he desires speech of her, how readily does she answer to the summons ? Once fairly satisfied that Claudio has undergone Benedick's challenge, her heart is lightened, and she can afford to resume some of her natural gaiety, and let herself be wooed. Then follows the charming dialogue in which the problem how they came to fall in love with each other is discussed. How much there is here for the actress

to express ! What pretty sarcasms and humorous sadness !—quite impossible to explain in words :—

Bene. And, I pray thee now, tell me for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me ?

Beat. For them all together ; which maintained so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me ?

Bene. 'Suffer love' ? A good epithet ! I do suffer love, indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart, I think. Alas, poor heart ! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours ; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. And now tell me, how doth your cousin ?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you ?

Beat. Very ill too.

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend ! There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste."

This is Ursula with the tidings that the plot against Hero has been unmasked, "the Prince and Claudio mightily abused, and Don John, the author of all, fled and gone." "Will you go hear this news, signor ?" says Beatrice. His rejoinder shows him all the happy lover. "I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thine eyes ; and, moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's." How quaintly comes in the "moreover" here !

When we see them again, they are with Leonato, Hero, and the others, who are met to receive Don Pedro and Claudio, and to seal the reconciliation which has been arranged by the marriage of Claudio with the lady whom he believes to be Hero's cousin. Marriage being in the air, Benedick has decided that the good friar shall have double duty to perform on the occasion. Leonato's consent to his wedding

Beatrice is granted freely ; and in giving it he bewilders Benedick by obscure references to the plot for bringing the two together. Before an explanation can be given, the Prince and Claudio arrive. Although well pleased that he is no longer required to call his old friend to account, Benedick takes care to show, by his coldness and reserve, that he considers them to have behaved badly, even had the story been true which Don John had beguiled them into believing. When the Prince rallies him about his "February face," he makes no rejoinder. But when Claudio, with infinite bad taste, at a moment when his mind should have been full of the gravest thoughts, attacks him in the same spirit, Benedick turns upon him with caustic severity. The entrance of Hero with her ladies masked arrests what might have grown into hot words. Hero is given to Claudio, and accepts him with a ready forgiveness, which I feel very sure, under similar circumstances, Beatrice's self-respect would not have permitted her to grant. Such treatment as Claudio's would have chilled all love within her. She would never have trusted as her husband the man who had allowed himself to be so easily deceived, and who had once openly shamed her before the world. Hero, altogether a feebler nature, neither looks so far into the future, nor feels so intensely what has happened in the past. But, to my thinking, her prospects of lasting happiness with the credulous and vacillating Claudio are somewhat doubtful.

I have no misgivings about the future happiness of Benedick and Beatrice, even although they learn how they have been misled into thinking that each was dying for the other, and up to the moment of going to the altar keep up their

witty struggles to turn the tables on each other. How delightful is the last glimpse we get of them! Beatrice, to tease Benedick, has been holding back among the other ladies, when he expects that she would be ready to go with him to the altar; and when at last, fairly puzzled, he asks, "Which is Beatrice?" and she unmasks, with the words, "What is your will?" he inquires, with an air of surprise, "Do you not love me?" What follows gives us once more the bright, joyous, brilliant Beatrice of the early scenes:—

Beat. Why, no! No more than reason.

Bene. Why, then, your uncle, the Prince, and Claudio have been deceived; they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

Bene. Troth, no! No more than reason.

Beat. Why, then, my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula, are much deceived; for they did swear you did.

Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore that you were wellnigh dead for me.

Bene. 'Tis no such matter:—Then you do not love me?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense."

And they break away from each other, as if all were over between them. But when their love sonnets each to the other are produced by Claudio and Hero, there can be but one end. Still, however, the war of wit goes on.

Bene. A miracle! here's our own hands against our hearts! Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity!

Beat. I would not deny you;—but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion; and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption."

Beatrice has, as usual, the best of it in this encounter, but Bene-

dick is too happy to care for such defeat. He knows he has won her heart, and that it is a heart of gold. He can, therefore, well afford to smile at the epigrams of "a college of wit-crackers," and the quotation against himself of his former smart sayings about lovers and married men. His home, I doubt not, will be a happy one—all the happier because Beatrice and he have each a strong individuality, with fine spirits and busy brains, which will keep life from stagnating. They will always be finding out something new and interesting in each other's character. As for Beatrice, at least, one feels sure that Benedick will have a great deal to discover and to admire in her the more he knows her. She will prove the fitness of her name, as Beatrice (the giver of happiness), and he will be glad to confess himself blest indeed (*Benedictus*) in having won her.

One might go on writing of this delightful play for ever. But it is not for me to go further into its merits. No doubt such criticism has often been written by abler hands. I have but to do with Beatrice, and I can only hope that, in impersonating her, I have given one-half the pleasure to my audience that I have had in taking upon me her nature for the time. Such representations were to me a pure holiday. However tired I might be when the play began, the pervading joyousness of her character soon took hold of me, and bore me delightedly on. The change to this bright, high-spirited, gallant-hearted lady, from the more soul-absorbing and pathetic heroines which on most occasions it fell to my lot to represent, was welcome to my often wearied spirits as a breeze from the sea.

I have told you of my first performance of Beatrice. Before I

conclude, let me say a word as to my last. It was at Stratford-upon-Avon, on the opening, on 23d of April 1879 (Shakespeare's birthday), of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. I had watched with much interest the completion of this most appropriate tribute to the memory of our supreme poet. The local enthusiasm, which would not rest until it had placed upon the banks of his native stream a building in which his best plays might be from time to time presented, commanded my warm sympathy. It is a beautiful building; and when, standing beside it, I looked upon the church wherein all that was mortal of the poet is laid, and, on the other hand, my eyes rested on the site of New Place, where he died, a feeling even more earnest, more reverential, came over me than I ever experienced in Westminster Abbey, or in Santa Croce, or in any other resting-place of the mighty dead. It was a deep delight to me to be the first to interpret on that spot one of my great master's brightest creations. Everything conspired to make the occasion happy. From every side of Shakespeare's county, from London, from remote provinces, came people to witness that performance. The characters were all well supported, and the fact that we were acting in Shakespeare's birthplace, and to inaugurate his memorial theatre, seemed to inspire us all. I found my own delight doubled by the sensitive sympathy of my audience. Every turn of playful humour, every flash of wit, every burst of strong feeling told; and it is a great pleasure to me to think, that on that spot and on that occasion I made my last essay to present a living portraiture of the Lady Beatrice.

The success of this performance

was aided by the very judicious care which had been bestowed upon all the accessories of the scene. The stage, being of moderate size, admitted of no elaborate display. But the scenes were appropriate and well painted, the dresses were well chosen, and the general effect was harmonious—satisfying the eye, without distracting the spectator's mind from the dialogue and the play of character. It was thus possible for the actors to secure the close attention of the audience, and to keep it. This consideration seems to me to be now too frequently overlooked.

The moment the bounds of what is sufficient for scenic illustration are overleaped, a serious wrong is, in my opinion, done to the actor, and, as a necessary consequence, to the spectator also. With all good plays this must in some measure be the case, but where Shakespeare is concerned, it is so in a far greater degree. How can actor or actress hope to gain that hold upon the attention of an audience by which it shall be led to watch, step by step, from the first scene to the last, the development of a complex yet harmonious character, or the links of a finely adjusted plot, if the eye and ear are being overfed with gorgeous scenery, with dresses extravagant in cost, and not unfrequently quaint even to grotesqueness in style, or by the bustle and din of crowds of people, whose movements unsettle the mind and disturb that mood of continuous observation of dialogue and expression, without which the poet's purpose can neither be developed by the performer nor appreciated by his audience?

For myself, I can truly say I would rather that the *mise-en-scène* should fall short of being sufficient, than that it should be overloaded.

However great the strain—I too often felt it—of so engaging the minds of my audience, as to make them forget the poverty of the scenic illustration, I would at all times rather have encountered it, than have had to contend against the influences which withdraw the spectator's mind from the essentials of a great drama to its mere adjuncts. When Juliet is on the balcony, it is on her the eye should be riveted. It should not be wandering away to the moonlight, or to the pomegranate-trees of Capulet's garden, however skilfully simulated by the scene-painter's and the machinist's skill. The actress who is worthy to interpret that scene requires the undivided attention of her audience. I cite this as merely one of a host of illustrations that have occurred to my mind in seeing the lavish waste of merely material accessories upon the stage in recent years. How often have I wished that some poetic spirit had been charged with the task of fitting the framework to the picture, which would have made the resources of the painter's and costumier's art subordinate to the poet's design, and have furnished a harmonious and unobtrusive background for the play of character, emotion, passion, humour, and imagination, which it was his object to set before us!

Of course, there are plays where very much must depend upon the setting in which they are placed. Who that saw it, for example, can ever forget Stanfield's scene in "*Acis and Galatea*," when produced by Mr Macready? The eye never wearied of resting upon it, nor the ear of listening to the rippling murmur of the waves as they gently rushed up and broke upon the shores of that sun-illuminated sea. Such a background en-

riched the charm of even Händel's music, and blended delightfully with the movements of the nymphs and shepherds by whom the business of the scene was carried on.

Nor, as I have been told, was his revival of the "*Comus*" less admirable. You may have seen it, dear Mr Ruskin; and, if you have, you can judge of its merits far better than I. For as I acted "*The Lady*," I can, of course, speak only of the scenes in which she took part. These impressed me powerfully, and helped my imagination as I acted. The enchanted wood was admirably presented, with its dense, bewildering maze of trees, so easy to be lost in, so difficult to escape from, with the fitful moonlight casting broad shadows, and causing terrors to the lonely, bewildered girl, whose high trust and confidence in Supreme help alone keep her spirits from sinking under the wild "*fantasies*," that throng into her memory, "*of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire*." It seemed to me the very place the poet must have pictured to himself. Not less so appeared to me the Hall of *Comus*—so far as I could see it from the enchanted chair, in which the Lady sits spellbound. It was a kind of *Aladdin's garden*, all aglow with colour and brilliancy. And then the rabble-rout, so gay, so variously clad, some like *Hebes*, some like *hags*; figures moving to and fro, some beautiful as *Adonis*, others like *Fauns* and bearded *Satyrs*! Add to this the weird fascination of the music, the rich melody, the rampant joyousness! All served to quicken in me the feeling with which the poet has inspired the lonely "*Lady*," when she sees herself, without means of escape, surrounded by a rabble-rout full of wine and riot, and

abandoned to shameless revelry. I lost myself in the reality of the situation, and found the poet's words flow from me as though they had sprung from my own heart. The blandishments of Comus's rhetoric, enforced with all the fervour and persuasiveness of delivery of which Mr Macready was master, seemed as it were to give the indignant impulse needed to make the Lady break her silence :—

"I had not thought to have unlocked
my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this
juggler
Would think to charm my judgment,
as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.
To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad Power of chastity,
Fain would I something say ; yet to
what end ?

Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her
dazzling fence :
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced ;
Yet, should I try, the uncontrôled worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my
rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
That dumb things should be moved to
sympathise,
And the brute earth would lend her
nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared
so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy
false head ! "

I could never speak these lines without a thrill, that seemed to dilate my whole frame, and to give an unwonted fulness of vibration to the tones of my voice. Given with intense earnestness, as they were, they no doubt impressed the actors of the rabble-rout, and made

them feel with Comus, when he says,—

"She fables not ; I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior
power."

It was somewhat difficult for me to speak the lines, with the whole frame thrilling, and yet unable to move a muscle, for the lady is bound by a spell that paralyzes all her limbs. It was a good experience for me, for at that time I was given to redundancy of action. One of the most difficult things in the technical part of my art is to gain repose of manner,—to be able, in fact, to stand still, and yet be undergoing and expressing the strongest mental emotion. What the effect may have been upon the audience I do not know, but those near my chair upon the stage told me, the night after the first representation, that they were struck with awe, and that my whole appearance seemed to become so completely transfigured under the influence of my emotion, that they would not have been amazed if the chair with the Lady in it had been swept upwards out of their sight to some holier sphere.

Here was a case in which the poet's purpose was aided by the skilful use of scenic adjuncts, without which the performer could not hope to produce the desired impression on the minds of the spectators. I can easily imagine other situations where they are of the greatest value. Indeed, I must vividly recall, as the very perfection of scenic illustration, "Henry V." and "King John," as they were produced by Mr Macready at Drury Lane. In these revivals, as they were called, the predominating mind of a man who knew the due proportion needful to be preserved in such matters, so as not to drown

but to heighten the dramatic interest, was conspicuously apparent. In plays of this class, moreover, fulness of scenic illustration is appropriate, and in skilful hands it will never be allowed to place the actors at a disadvantage. But, as a rule, it seems to me that in dramas of "high action and high passion," such things ought to be sparingly applied. Surely the aim should be, while keeping scenic accessories in stern subordination, to economise neither pains nor money in getting every character acted with all the finish that trained ability and conscientious care can give.

Foremost of all, care should be taken that the actors of all grades shall have been trained to speak blank verse correctly,—to know the laws of its construction,—and while giving the meaning, to give the music of it also. It is sad to see the reckless ignorance on all these points which now prevails, and to note to what a level of feebleness and commonplace the representation of Shakespeare has, with some notable exceptions,

been reduced by that nerveless and colourless thing, mistakenly called "natural acting." Thus it is that Shakespeare's plays are continually being reproduced; and yet their very essence is left out, unheeded by the actors, and, alas! as much unheeded by the audience. Of what account is elaborate scenery, or dresses that will satisfy the most squeamish archæologist, if those who wear the one or move about in the other are untrue to the characters they profess to represent, and dead to the significance and the beauty of the language they have to speak?

The interest I know you, dear Mr Ruskin, feel in these questions must be my excuse for touching upon them in this letter. May I hope that my views in regard to them, as well as my estimate of the character of Beatrice, are in harmony with yours; and that you will not think I have kept you too long "listening with all your heart" to what I have to say?—Believe me always, with sincere esteem, most truly yours,

HELENA FAUCIT MARTIN.

81 ONSLOW SQUARE,
6th January, 1885.

LIFE IN A DRUSE VILLAGE.—PART II.

WHEN my house was completed, and I moved up from Haifa to take possession of it, the whole village of Dahlieh turned out *en masse* to receive me. As we wound up the pretty valley, at the head of which it is situated, the scene was both novel and picturesque. The female part of the population, clad in bright array of many colours, lined the highest terrace; while the men, some on foot and some on horseback, came down the winding path to meet us,—the latter, in spite of the rugged nature of the country, forcing their horses to attempt impossible equestrian evolutions, and dashing here and there over the rocky ground, with right arm thrown back and extended, after the manner of jereed-players; and the former drawn up in line, and making profound salutations as we passed; while the women set up the shrill ululating scream which is usual with them when they desire to give vent to their feelings of pleasure and satisfaction, or to celebrate any great event.

My first days were pretty well taken up holding levees, and giving and receiving hospitality. Having had some experience of the curiosity and unintentionally obtrusive habits of the people, I had taken the precaution, in order to secure privacy, to have a *liwan* or reception-room partially detached from the house; and on the simple divan which was its sole furniture, I passed the greater part of the first few mornings, dispensing syrup and water and coffee, making acquaintance individually with nearly all the inhabitants, and finding out as much as possible about the condition of local affairs generally. The accepting of hospitality was a

more arduous undertaking, for it consisted in partaking with one's fingers of elaborate repasts, first at the houses of the two sheikhs, and then with one or two of the notables, and which consisted generally of an immense pyramid of rice, boiled mutton, stewed chicken, sour milk, honey, eggs fried in oil, and other dainties.

There are always two sheikhs in a Druse village—one who looks after its secular affairs, while the other manages its spiritual matters; and I very soon discovered that they regarded each other with feelings of some jealousy, as the heads of rival factions, and that it would require the exercise of some diplomacy to maintain such a strict impartiality in my intercourse with them as should preserve the friendship of both. The whole village may indeed be said to consist of two huge families, of which the two sheikhs are the respective heads; and though they have intermarried to any extent, this has served rather to complicate than to conciliate the family differences which were likely to arise under such a state of things. The great facility of divorce among the Druses increases this liability to discordant domestic relations. A Druse, when he wants to change his wife, has only to tell her to go back to her parents; and she is obliged on the spot to decamp, enlisting naturally the sympathy of her own mother and the rest of her family against the heartless husband who has turned her out. I must say, however, that upon these occasions there is a stronger instinct than that of family—one which manifests itself under another form in more advanced countries under the name

of "woman's rights." I have seen several village rows now, and all the women are invariably on one side, and all the men on the other. Whatever happens when high words begin, woman flies to the defence of woman, with a sisterly heroism which is truly remarkable; and the males finding their tongues utterly useless in the encounter, generally end by coarsely taking to their fists. However, I will say for Dahlieh that it is not worse than other villages in this respect—indeed I think it is better, and that the people, taking them as a whole, form a remarkably orderly and good-tempered community: the storm soon blows over, and in a few hours everybody is apparently on terms as affectionate as if it had never happened.

Under these circumstances, life in a Druse village may be made dull or interesting in the degree in which one identifies one's self with the interests of the inhabitants. People wonder what one can find to do in this out-of-the-way corner of Palestine; but practically we never seem to have a moment to spare. In the first place, what would be a trifling operation elsewhere, here becomes an important matter of business, attended with all manner of difficulties. The purchase of half an acre of land, for instance, takes days, and sometimes even weeks: the discussion of the price is a serious matter, and must not be hurried; and when that is arranged, the process of securing a valid title is one requiring both time and money, and probably a journey to Haifa, and difficulties there involving backsheesh. If the value of the land is 10s., the time taken to buy it is at least as many days, and the incidental expenses perhaps as many more shillings. Everything included, however, the best arable

land in Carmel costs on an average from 20s. to 30s. the acre; but there are thousands of acres on the mountain susceptible of cultivation which are now lying waste. These may be appropriated by any one who chooses to go to the expense of clearing, and of cultivating them for three consecutive years. He may then receive a title from the Government, provided always he is already a landholder in the village within the limits of which the waste land lies.

I have found it impossible to obtain from the natives of Dahlieh any estimate of the extent of land, cleared and uncleared, within the village boundaries; but it probably does not fall far short of 5000 acres, of which they only cultivate about 700. Of these, 300 are in the plain of Esdraelon, and form the main source of the revenue of the village: the rest are on the mountain; and the uncleared land affords pasture for their cattle and goats, of which they have large herds. The Government tax which they are called upon to pay in cash upon this total, amounts to about £320 a-year.

The substitution of yearly cash-payments for the payment in kind of the tenth of their crops has only been introduced this year, and has produced consternation throughout the country. The villagers have never been in the habit of having any money of their own. They live largely by a system of barter, and the responsibility of their taxes has hitherto fallen upon the money-lenders of the nearest town, who farm the taxes from the Government, and to whom the villagers pay a share, generally an exorbitant one, of their crops, which includes the Government tenth. Now all this is changed; the villages have been assessed at a very high rate

to pay an annual sum in cash, and they know not which way to turn. The amount assessed is in most cases so excessive, that the money-lenders themselves are appalled at the prospect of lending the villagers the necessary sum, even at exorbitant rates of interest, taking the village itself as security, if their security is so heavily burdened with taxation that it may prove a white elephant on their hands. When the news was first promulgated this year, the sheikhs of all the villages in this part of Palestine united in a protest, and have sent deputations to the authorities to seek relief. But so far their efforts have been unavailing: those who refused the engagement for the payments were threatened with imprisonment if they did not sign it; and they have in most instances done so, though they are in despair at the prospect before them. In some cases they have succeeded in borrowing the money at 30 or 40 per cent; but this means handing themselves and their lands, body and soul, over to the extortionate money-lender, whom they will never be able to repay. In other cases, they are waiting in helpless misery to see what will turn up when the money is not forthcoming. But all unite in believing and hoping that practically it will be found so impossible to meet these new demands, that they will have to be abandoned by the Government and a new scale substituted. The only fault, indeed, in the new system is, that in almost every instance the amount fixed has been too high. The substitution of a fixed assessment for the old farming system, which gave rise to so many abuses, is to be commended rather than otherwise; but unless the present scale is reduced, it would seem as though it would complete the ruin of the country. When I came to

take up my summer abode in Dahlieh, I found the village in the throes of financial difficulties arising from this cause, which, however, I hope they will now succeed in tiding over.

Indeed these poor villagers seem always in a peck of trouble from one cause or another, and the appearance of a couple of *zaptiehs* or rural police, a not uncommon occurrence, fills them with alarm. At one moment these gentry appear, to hurry them with the payment of their taxes; at another, to carry off some of their number as conscripts for the army; at another, to look for deserters; and the life of the secular sheikh, who is responsible at all points for his village, is no sinecure. The military grievance is perhaps the one they feel the most, and yet it is difficult to see how it can be remedied.

The Druse nation is divided into three sections, of which by far the greatest inhabits the *Jebel Druse*, a mountainous and somewhat inaccessible district to the east of the *Hauran*, where the Turkish authority is little more than nominal, where no conscription is attempted to be forced, and the taxation is of the lightest. In fact, the *Druses* there, who are governed by one of their race appointed by the Government, are practically independent. The rest of the nation inhabits the *Lebanon*, with the exception of these few villages in *Galilee*. The *Lebanon Druses*, who come under the international instrument known as the *Règlement du Liban*, are also free from conscription, excepting for militia service in their own country, and, like their neighbours the *Maronites*, enjoy the protection of the *Treaty Powers*. The small fraction in *Palestine*, so far from enjoying the privileges of their co-religionists in the *Lebanon* and *Jebel Druse*, are in a worse

position than any of the fellaheen amongst whom they live whether Christian or Moslem. The Christians are exempt from military service by virtue of their creed, besides enjoying the protection of the Church to which they belong, which, in its turn, is under the *egis* either of France or Russia. The Moslems, though liable to conscription, are at any rate in religious sympathy with the Government, and are more or less favoured in consequence.

The Druses of Palestine have none of the privileges of the Christians or the advantages of the Moslems. They are regarded as a sort of pariah class, and despised as infidels by both. Hence they are robbed with impunity by their Moslem neighbours, oppressed without possibility of redress by the authorities, as being too unbelieving in matters of religion to be deserving of any one's sympathy; while their denial of the true faith does not protect them, as it does the Christians, from being called upon to serve as soldiers. The consequence is, that there is weeping and wailing every year in some eighteen or twenty villages which are in this exceptional position, when some of their young men are drafted off for service, which arises not merely from the grief of immediate separation, but from the anticipation of future trouble; for, in nine cases out of ten, not a year elapses before these recruits find opportunities of deserting, and seek their refuge in the Jebel Druse, where pursuit by the Turkish authorities is impossible. As infidels, they find existence in a Moslem army intolerable, especially when they can win their liberty so easily by escaping to their co-religionists beyond the Hauran. Their desertion is the certain prelude to a visit by the

zaptiehs to the village from which they were conscripted, and it thus becomes liable to a contribution, the amount of which depends more or less upon the good pleasure of the head of the police. The unhappy family to which the deserter belongs lives for the future under a constant financial pressure, thus dearly paying for the liberty which the defaulting member has purchased at their expense. It seems at first sight hard that the Druses of these few villages should not be put upon the same footing as the Christians, or their more fortunate kinsmen in the Hauran and Lebanon. But this would introduce a precedent which the Government very naturally refuses to establish, as it would apply equally to the Metawalies, the Ansaryii, the Ismailians, and other non-Moslem sects in the empire, which also are not Christian; and it would give rise to great dissatisfaction among the Moslems, who would refuse to see the expediency or justice of exempting infidels of this category from the conscription to which they were themselves liable. So great is the horror of military service among these people, that a few days ago a man who had just been drawn as a conscript came to me and offered to bind himself to my service for five years in any part of the world if I would purchase his discharge; and when, after satisfying myself as to the character of the man, I accepted his offer, his gratitude, and that of his family, was unbounded. This reluctance to serve is not because they are bad fighters—the experience of the Turks in their numerous conflicts with the Druses proves the contrary—but because they object to being specially selected by the officers to be placed in the front of battle, as having less valuable lives than the Moslems,

and because they have to endure so much petty persecution at the hands of their comrades in the army; at least this is the explanation given by themselves.

The behaviour of the zaptiehs when they visit these villages is often harsh and tyrannical in the extreme. They quarter themselves in the houses of the inhabitants, who are obliged to keep them and their horses free of charge as long as they choose to remain, and to submit to their overbearing conduct without remonstrance. On one occasion, when a sergeant and two men were at the village, a man came to me with his breast bleeding with blows which he had received from one of the men. I was listening to his tale, when my servant appeared, white, or rather amber-coloured, from indignation. He had protested against a zaptieh—the same zaptieh who had struck the man—watering his horse at a trough filled with water drawn especially for my horses, and had also been beaten. I at once sought out the offender, and in the heat of the moment paid him back in his own coin. The sergeant then came up, and, afraid of the consequences, sought to propitiate me. After making the man stand in the sun for an hour in the presence of the villagers, I finally agreed not to make a formal complaint to his superior officer at Haifa, on condition of his apologising publicly to the man he had struck, as well as to my servant, which he did with a great show of humility.

Besides events of this public nature, there are others of a more private character, which serve to relieve the monotony of life in a Druse village. The other day, aroused by a violent uproar, I went into the street, and found a handsome young fellow, one of the sheikh's sons, surrounded by a

posse of screaming women, whose abuse drove him to such a frenzy of rage that he seized a huge stone and would have hurled it at them, had not his father, whom I was in the act of questioning as to the cause of the tumult, rushed to the rescue. With great difficulty he succeeded in quelling the disturbance. Meantime I observed with surprise the young man's wife, a remarkably pretty young woman, whom he had presented to me the day before, standing in a verandah, apparently quite unconcerned at the excitement which was raging against her husband, leaning against a post, with her baby in her arms. She looked on, and smiled languidly. I said to a man standing near—

"What is all the row about? At any rate, the wife does not seem to take much interest in it."

"What would be the use?" he replied. "He has just divorced her, and all the women are abusing him for it. His father is angry with him too, for she is his niece, and his own first cousin, and it brings discredit on the family."

"Then why does he do it?" I asked. "She is a very pretty young woman, and he seemed to have no such intention yesterday when he introduced me to her as his wife."

"Oh yes, he had. He has been planning for it for some time, only he could not find an excuse. I suppose he has made one now. He is in love with another woman, whom he wishes to marry."

Then I saw the baby put into the cradle, which a man took up, followed by the wife still smiling, and by the mother-in-law raging, and by the sheikh sullen and dignified, and they marched off to the mother-in-law's house, which was henceforth to be the house of the discarded wife, who thus promptly

evacuated her husband's premises "bag and baggage," to make room for her successor. Shortly after, the sheikh reappeared, wrote out a paper—which I afterwards heard was a paper of divorce—and proceeding to the mother-in-law's house, followed by a mixed crowd of men and women, solemnly read the document, and the separation became a *fait accompli*. From this example, and from what I have been able to gather, I incline to the opinion that Druse women have no hearts where love affairs are concerned, though they seem to have strong maternal instincts. However, I have not been long enough among them to be able to pronounce upon this point definitely. The sheikh himself is not immaculate in respect of proceedings of this nature; but his conduct is shrouded in mystery, which I have not completely solved. It was brought to my notice in this manner. A few mornings ago my servant came to tell me that a young man wanted to see me in the kitchen. I went there, and found a youth of two- or three-and-twenty hanging on to the kitchen table as if it were the horns of the altar. Near him was an elderly woman weeping, with whose aspect I was familiar, though I had never asked her name. To my astonishment, I was now informed, for the first time, that she was the sheikh's wife. In all my intercourse with that worthy, although I had several times dined and once even slept in his house, I had never so much as heard of her existence, but had always been waited upon by his daughter. Now it appeared that she was his second wife, that she did not live in his house, that she had had children by a former marriage, that the young man before me was one of them, that an incident had taken

place the preceding night which had rendered the young man obnoxious to the sheikh's sons by his first wife, and his life was in danger, and that he had fled to me for protection.

At this point the spiritual sheikh appeared,—his son had married a daughter of the old lady's, and sister to the young man. I took him into the *liwan*, and requested him, in Scotch-law parlance, to "condescend" upon particulars. As far as I could make out, the temporal sheikh's sons were jealous of their step-brothers, and especially of this one, who made too free of his step-father's house, and they had brought against him a baseless accusation. Pressed to define this, he said that the night before the young man had lost his cow, and that he had searched for her everywhere, and, among other places, on the top of the house of the sheikh's brother, which was, in fact, the bedroom of the young wife of that worthy,—and that there he had been found, and soundly thrashed by the irate husband and his nephews, the sheikh's sons, who had also taken the opportunity of thrashing their step-mother. I suggested that cows did not usually roost on the tops of houses, and that the suspicions of the jealous sons and their no less jealous uncle might be well founded. This the spiritual sheikh, whose sympathies were all with his daughter-in-law's family, denied. At all events, he said that the sheikh's sons had sworn to have the young man's life, that in their present frame of mind they were sure to keep their word, and that his only safety was to remain in my kitchen. Unfortunately the temporal sheikh was absent, so I sent for his sons; but they declined to come, sending word that they felt ashamed.

Next day the sheikh appeared, I represented to him the impossibility of my boarding and lodging his step-son indefinitely, and asked him whether he could not protect him. He said he could as long as he himself was in the village, but not during his absence. I suggested sending the culprit off to the Hauran. He said that in that case his wife, the youth's mother, would follow her son. As he seemed to speak of this contingency with regret, I suggested that she should be sent for to meet her husband in my house, and a reconciliation should be effected. He said he desired nothing more. So I sent for the old lady, but she declined to come. I now began to feel that I was getting so deeply immersed in Druse domestic relations, that I was becoming confused by them. But there was the lad still in the kitchen, and his bloodthirsty step-brothers outside, and something had to be done. Finally, the sheikh said that he thought that if the young man went to stay with a Christian of my acquaintance at Esfia he would be safe, and he himself would not be heart-broken if his mother chose to follow him there, and that when the storm blew over he could come back. So he was packed off to Esfia. The mother did not follow him, but, for some reason best known to herself, remained in hiding for some days. Whenever I asked where she was, I was told vaguely "in the woods." When she did reappear, she took up her abode with the spiritual sheikh, and is always very glad to come and do a day's work for me—drying figs, making mud-plaster, and so forth—whenever I can provide her with work. Meanwhile, the sheikh her husband comes and calls, and sips his coffee, and com-

placently regards his better-half thus earning her living by drudgery without honouring her with his notice. He has a grown-up daughter by this wife, to whom he seems much attached, and who appears to divide her affections with great impartiality between her estranged parents. What puzzles me is—but I have not ventured to ask the question—why, with divorce so easy, they continue to live on these terms. The old spiritual sheikh, who is a most venerable and charming old man, though not without his faults, was not deterred in early life from following the prevailing custom: he had also divorced his wife; and her successor is what would be called in America the "boss" woman of the village. No tones so shrill, no language so abusive, no energy so indomitable as hers; she is the head and front of every row, and was especially active in behalf of her daughter-in-law's family. But she has a warm heart and generous nature, and is untiring in her efforts to render me some service in return for the one I rendered her in saving her son from the conscription, and indeed, if I would only let her, would gladly undertake the management of my whole household, and slave herself to death, without any other recompense than that which she would derive from the constant exercise of authority. During the first weeks of my residence here, she and her whole family invaded my back premises to that extent that I was obliged to place restrictions on their visiting, or rather trespassing, propensities. Still the whole village seems to consider the place common property. They take a great pride and interest in all our little efforts at beautification and landscape-gardening, being much puzzled

and struck thereby; and whenever they receive visits from the sheikhs of neighbouring villages, which is happening constantly, they are instantly brought to see me, and if I am absent, shown over the place by one or other of the village notables, who are much flattered and gratified by their *mushallahs*, and other expressions of surprise and delight, as they think how their guests will return to their own village and expatiate on the wonders they have seen. It must not be supposed that they have seen anything but a very modest abode; still it has some of the marks of civilisation about it, and to these unsophisticated people they are indications of great grandeur. What astonishes the women most is, that my wife does not go down to the well twice a-day for water with a jar on her head, nor does she make "barbarica" or mud-plaster, or climb into the fig-trees to pick the fruit, or bake the bread, or indeed perform any of the whole duties of woman. This apparent indifference to all ordinary feminine avocations is a never-ending source of envy and surprise, which is increased by the still more incomprehensible fact that she occupies herself largely in studying Arabic, painting in oils, and doctoring the inhabitants. At first they somewhat mistrusted her skill in this particular; but she has been so successful in her practice, having indeed elsewhere had a pretty extensive medical experience, that her fame is spreading to an inconvenient extent, and every morning now sees a group of patients waiting to be treated. Practice here however, presents difficulties unknown to the medical profession in more civilised countries. It is impossible to have any instructions carried out, partly from

prejudice, partly from stupidity, and partly from ignorance. The patient who requires fresh air and quiet, always lies in the one public room, surrounded by a crowd of waiting-women if his disease is serious. The people have no idea of time, excepting with reference to distance. If you ask them if they know what an hour is, they say it is as far as from here to Esfia. Hence it is hopeless to prescribe doses to be given at intervals, excepting sunrise and sunset. All periods of time are uncertain. In the summer, fevers are prevalent, because nearly the whole of the population moves down to the cabins on the plain of Esdraelon, where the village owns about 300 acres, the crops on which they have to get in and thrash. These mud-huts are only inhabited during the two or three summer months, but they are the most feverish of the year. Otherwise there is very little sickness in Dahlieh, the climate of which is both healthy and agreeable all the year round.

Accidents and wounds are, however, common, which often terminate fatally owing to the absence of surgical assistance. My curiosity was one day excited by the perpetually tearful condition of an old woman apparently in the extreme of poverty. Upon making inquiries in regard to her circumstances, I found that she had been entirely dependent for support upon an only son. This young man was noted among his companions for his strength, and being not long since on his way to the neighbouring village of Umm-es-Zeinat with a donkey-load of grapes and figs, was waylaid by three of Umm-es-Zeinat men. Being armed with a heavy club, he succeeded in keeping these at bay. They were, however, joined by four others; and

after a severe struggle, during which he put several *hors de combat* he was himself disabled by a bullet from a rifle which one of his assailants carried. They then left him, supposing him to be dead, but he succeeded in crawling home several miles, and lingered for ten days before he died. From what I can make out, it is probable that, had he been properly attended to, his life might have been saved. As he was well acquainted with his murderers, who were all members of the sheikh of Umm-es-Zeinat's family, he denounced them to the authorities, and they were arrested and imprisoned, but, after a short confinement, were released on the payment of the necessary backsheesh. The old woman now wishes me to take up her case, and insist upon the punishment of the culprits; and I find that it will be possible to obtain her a pecuniary compensation for her loss. This, in spite of her destitute circumstances, she indignantly refuses, vengeance being sweeter to her than cash. But this could only be obtained by a very considerable expenditure of money, and the incurring of much unnecessary hostility; so I have compromised the matter by finding her employment.

There is, indeed, a curious mixture of security and insecurity of life and property in this country. I sleep every night with all the doors and windows of the house wide open, but twice during the night we have found that thieves have been stealing the leaves from the tobacco in the field which joins it behind, and grapes from the vineyard only fifty yards off in front; but they would never dare to push their depredations into the house. I don't feel so certain about the horses, which are tethered in a shed at the back, especially after an incident which occurred a few days

since, only about five miles from here. A German colonist was driving his team by night from Haifa to Nazareth, when a Circassian passed him on horseback and gave him the usual salutation: he then whistled, and turned sharply back, two other Circassians appearing simultaneously from an ambush near the road, where they had been hiding. The German, who was an old soldier, scenting mischief, drew his revolver as the Circassians at the same moment sprang from their animals and seized his horses' heads. Jumping from the box, the German rushed to grapple with them, when he was dealt a heavy blow by one of them, with whom he was soon engaged in a severe struggle, while the others were cutting the traces of the horses. Observing that his assailant had drawn a knife, he saw that no time was to be lost, and firing a revolver, dropped him on the spot. The two others now set upon him; and firing again, he wounded one of them. A fourth then came up; but instead of attacking the German, the two Circassians succeeded in placing their wounded comrades on their horses under the fire of his remaining barrels, and galloped away. From the report of a villager with whom they had passed the night it was afterwards found that one Circassian had been killed outright, one severely and one slightly wounded. Having thus disposed of his assailants, the German, with characteristic phlegm, patched up his harness, and with a very sore and bruised body proceeded on his journey to Nazareth. Since this episode I have decided to build a stable in which to keep the horses under lock and key. Were it not for the Circassians, this would not be necessary, so far as the native fellaheen are concerned; but the Circassians are inveterate horse-

stealers, and there is a colony of them which has been recently established about fifteen miles distant. No doubt there are parts of the country which are less safe than others ; but I have been in the habit of riding about Carmel at all hours alone, and have never observed any symptom of danger—indeed it is very rare, even in the course of a ride to Haifa, to meet a living soul on the sparsely inhabited mountain.

It is only to be expected that, in a district and amid a population which have been so much neglected, there is plenty to be done. The difficulty is, to know where to begin, and how to set about it. The obstacles in the way of progress are mainly from the Government, and not, as might be supposed, from the prejudices of the inhabitants themselves. The Druses are especially eager for improvement. Their first inquiry was, whether it would not be possible for me to help them to make a waggon-road to the plain, which would enable them to carry manure to their fields, and their produce to Haifa. They are the first villagers I have met who seem to have any idea of the use of manure for agricultural purposes. Then they expressed a great desire to have a school, as the village was destitute of all means of education. With some kind missionary assistance, I have succeeded in meeting their wishes in this respect. The village furnishes the schoolmaster with board and lodging free, and has set apart a house for school purposes. The master's salary is supplied from other sources. He teaches the Arabic and English languages, besides other elementary branches of knowledge ; and the attendance of boys already exceeds fifty, although the school is not a month old, and, as soon as the pressure of agricultural work is

over, will be largely increased. About twenty girls have also applied for admission. The neighbouring villages are also making efforts to send their boys, though the distances to be traversed every day involve journeys of from two to three hours. It is a pity that any attempt at the amelioration of the condition of the people, however harmless, should have a tendency to arouse official suspicion. Some deep political design is supposed to lie behind a school : the improving of a mountain path, with a view to making it available for agricultural purposes, may mean the commencement of a military road preparatory to the invasion of the country by a hostile army ; and an innocent little bath-house which I put up on the beach, was gravely suspected of being the beginning of a fortification. As for the purchase of land, that, although legally and internationally his right, is virtually almost prohibited to the foreigner, and at present can only be accomplished on a very small scale. This is the more trying when one rides over thousands of acres of fine arable land, only waiting for the application of capital and industry to be made to yield rich returns. The crops on Mount Carmel itself are almost limited to wheat and a little barley, and a species of vetch : near the two villages there is a little sesame and tobacco, with olive-groves, gardens, and vineyards. There is probably no better locality anywhere for vines, as the ancient terraces show, and the very name of the mountain indicates. But under native culture the vines are allowed to sprawl over the ground at will : the consequence is, that the grapes get wasted on the hot stones by day and chilled by the night dews, and one-third of the crop is lost unless they are picked prematurely. They

are, moreover, much attacked by the jackals at night. These animals have a passion for grapes; and in every vineyard is a leaf-but, in which the proprietor or one of his family watch all night with their dogs, beating old petroleum-tins or playing on their scarcely less discordant pipes, to scare away thieves, whether of four legs or two. I had always supposed till now that Esop had endowed his fox with an unnatural taste when he hankered after sweet grapes as an article of diet; but jackals seem to be not so particular as foxes, for they eat the grapes when they are decidedly sour. The natives of Dahlieh rarely ever carry their grapes to market as far as Haifa, but send them to Tireh, a village about seven miles off, where there is a grove of 30,000 olive-trees, and exchange their grapes for olive-oil or carobs. The system of barter, indeed, enters largely into the habits of these simple people: they exchange their bee's-wax for soap, their grain for pottery-jars and other household utensils that they cannot make, and the fruits and produce they grow for those of various kinds which they need. As their wants are limited, their system of agriculture primitive, their natural tendencies indolent, and the taxes of the Government are oppressive, they lack the inducements to enterprise which under other circumstances would stimulate their energies. Indeed, considering the discouraging conditions under which existence is maintained, it is wonderful how light-hearted and cheerful these poor peasants are. I am speaking now of the Druses, of whom alone I have had experience. They have their religious festivals, which usually take the form of picnics, generally to some sacred spot or the shrine of a venerated saint. Sometimes it is to the cave of

Elijah, situated below the Carmelite Monastery; sometimes to the Mukrakha, or place of his sacrifice; at others to some still more distant locality. I have upon two occasions accepted invitations to join in these festivals—once at the Mukrakha, and once at the Neby Schaib, supposed to be the burial-place of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, near the village of Hattin, distant from here a good day's journey. The first was a local affair, in which nearly the whole village took part,—the women and girls starting at a very early hour in the morning on foot and donkey-back, clad in gala costume; the men following later—the sheikhs and village notables, to the number of about twenty, being mounted, and preceded by a band of youths on foot chanting their songs of love and war. Whenever we reach an open, level, tempting space, the horsemen dash to and fro with their mock jereed-playing, and the young men fire their guns; and so we march for an hour till we reach our destination, where the young women have already assembled, and are beginning to form in dancing circles. The young men lose no time in following their example. The old women sit and gossip under the shade of such small trees as they can find, apart from the elder men, who spread their mats in the most eligible spots, and sip their coffee, and discuss their political, religious, or financial concerns.

The Carmelite monks have, within the last year, built a chapel on the place of Elijah's sacrifice; but as none of them live there, it is left under the charge of a Druse family of Dahlieh. As he has the keys, he opens it freely to his co-religionists, who troop in, the females gazing open-mouthed at the ornaments on the altar; and then

they finally betake themselves to the flat roof, and finding it in the highest degree available for dancing purposes, they form their terpsichorean circles on its smooth surface. I wondered, as I gazed on these groups of lively performers, whether the roof of a Roman Catholic chapel had ever been put to such a use before.

The dances, which are somewhat monotonous, and always in the highest degree proper, consist of circles of dancers, either male or female, who clasp each other by their girdles, moving round in measured step. In the centre of the girls' circle, one or two of their number wave handkerchiefs or scarves above their heads, and keep time to the music, which consists of chanting, hand-clapping, and sometimes pipes; while the men in the centre of the men's circle flourish swords. Throughout the day's entertainment, the two sexes keep carefully apart, which, considering the exceptional beauty of the Druse girls of Dahlieh, must be rather trying to the young men of that village.

The costume of the women, who in this part of the country make no attempt to conceal their generally pretty faces, is eminently becoming, and consists of a loose outer garment or sort of cloak, of a rich colour, linen or woollen, open all down the front so as to display the whole underdress, with light sleeves, cut above the elbow—the whole trimmed either with wide bands of reddish satin, or with a rich cross-stitch embroidery of silk. The unsightliness of the baggy trousers of dark blue is lost under the long semi-transparent chemise, which falls over them so as nearly to cover them as a white tunic, generally striped with thicker white, and tastefully embroidered with silk round the neck. The

white sleeves of the chemise, widely pointed, and which flow about the forearm after escaping from the short cloak sleeves, form a simple but very graceful feature of this costume, whether they float freely or are twisted for convenience in work about the elbow. Scarves of various bright colours are wound about the waist, and the cloak is usually caught together below the bosom, giving that double girdle often presented in ancient classical costume. The simple long white cloth, with the centre of one edge drawn low upon the forehead, its two ends hanging down the back almost to the heels, bound fast by a wide fillet of brilliant colour tied round the head, completes very attractively, with its ancient Egyptian appearance, this simple but highly characteristic dress, which is enhanced by necklaces and bangles, according to the rank and position of the wearer.

I had the best opportunity of observing all these particulars on the occasion of my trip to the Neby Schaib, in company with the pilgrimage of Dahlieh Druses to that venerated shrine. Here were gathered the sheikhs and the most important representatives of some twelve or fourteen villages, each sheikh arriving like some feudal chief of old, surrounded by his clansmen singing and firing, and by women screaming. I remained encamped there three days, during which the festival lasted, and gained an insight into Druse religious observances and national manners which is not often enjoyed by an outsider. The shrine was most picturesquely situated in a narrow rocky gorge, and consisted of a lofty dome-shaped building, the upper chamber of which is about 70 feet long by 40 wide, and contains the tomb of the prophet, enclosed in a wooden

screen hung with red cloth, while over the tomb itself was spread a sort of green silk pall embroidered with gold stars. Some of the Druse sheikhs who accompanied me, reverently pressed their lips to this. They then pointed out a square block of limestone, in the centre of which was a piece of alabaster containing the imprint of a human foot of natural size. The toes were not defined, but the impression was so distinct, that it was easy to understand why it should have seized hold of the popular imagination. It was of course believed to be the footprint of the prophet, and the Druses said that it exuded a perpetual moisture, which, however, I failed to perceive. In curious contrast to these sacred objects was the scene which was taking place in the venerated chamber that contained them. When I visited it, it was being used as the ladies' dining-room, and was crowded with a laughing, chattering, feeding feminine multitude, with their glorious eyes, white regular teeth, bewitching smiles, and delicate fingers plunged up to the knuckles into huge piles of greasy rice. On the terraces and in the court below men were dancing; while the sheikhs and *ukkul*, or initiated into the holy mysteries, who despise all such frivolities which are permitted to the youth of both sexes, were seated in a solemn circle apart, discussing either religion or the political questions affecting the interests of their nation,—most probably the latter, for there can be no doubt that they utilise these pious gatherings for secular purposes—the exclusive character of their religion, and the secrecy which surrounds it, enabling them to organise in a special manner, while the theocratic element which enters into their po-

litical constitution gives them a power for combined action which the Christian sects, with their jealousies, bigotry, and internal dissensions, do not enjoy.

Soon after sunset the uproar died away, the elders wished me good-night, and silently trooped up-stairs to the great hall, whence issued the younger part of the female community, and I retired to the door of my tent, to sit in the bright moonlight and contemplate the strange surroundings of my night-quarters.

Soon there broke upon the stillness of the night the measured cadence of a sacred chant. Now it swelled, as numerous voices, male and female, took up the chorus; now it died away to a single voice. Not often before, probably, had a stranger been able to listen so closely to the tones and rhythmical sounds which characterise the mysterious and occult worship of the Druses. It differs from all other religions in this, that they address no prayers or invocations to the Deity—and from most oriental religions, that the women take part in some of their ceremonies. Not in all, however, for upon the following night the women were excluded. Throughout the greater part of two consecutive nights, to my certain knowledge, did these services last; though, as I fell asleep, on each occasion, towards morning, I cannot precisely say at what hour they were concluded.

It will be seen from this narrative of some of my experiences of life in a Druse village in the most romantic and historical mountain in Palestine, that it is one's own fault if it is dull or monotonous, and that, for those who are not afraid of making interests for themselves, while they become identified with those by which they are surrounded, it is not without its responsibilities and its charm.

PLAIN FRANCES MOWBRAY.

[CHAPTER I.

A DAY of steady downpour at Venice is not one of the most cheerful things I know. It is worst, of course, in November and December, because of the bleakness then of everything ; because of the bare trees in the sparsely scattered gardens, of the nakedness of the vine twigs, which in summer time make so delightful an awning at the *traghetti* and over the more fortunate of the balconies. Even in April and May, however, it is quite bad enough. From end to end of the Grand Canal a uniform soot colour, whitish in the houses, pure soot in the water, inclining to blackness in the archways and under the shadows of the bridges ; blue, red, green, and orange only where the flaming advertisements diversify the otherwise unalleviated gloom ; funereal convoys of gondolas slipping by with a woeful air, propelled by gloomy figures in long black or white cloaks, despondent, like men weighed down with the consciousness of a destiny which it is heart-breaking to contemplate and hopeless to evade. Lady Frances Mowbray walked up and down the floor of her principal sitting-room at the *Traghetto San Eustachio*, now and then stopping to look out of one of the windows. There were no fewer than six windows in the room, not to mention some smaller ones in the lunettes under the ceiling, which were perfectly useless, of course, for the purpose of observation. The light from these six windows fell upon walls enlivened with much gilding and white plaster work, happily toned down by time and indifferent usage to a mild and mellow radi-

ance ; upon large canvasses, not any of them, indeed, of any very transcendent or inestimable value, still irradiated with that glow which lights up even the least distinguished members of an illustrious period ; upon bronzes and carved woodwork ; upon marble columns ; upon a great deal of delicately-scrolled and intertwined iron-work around the windows. It was such a room, in short, as one commonly associates with royal or semi-royal residences in other towns, but in Venice it merely formed part of a suite of furnished lodgings, —very good furnished lodgings, but nothing at all so extraordinary or out of the way. Lady Frances and her brother had occupied it off and on now for the last six or seven years, paying a rent of a few, very few, thousand francs a-year, and putting in additional touches here and there from time to time as their taste or fancy suggested, but not materially altering or even modifying its aspect. They did not, of course, spend the whole year there, going away as a rule in early summer, and not returning until the fogs of November and December had given place to something like a semblance of spring. Even January, February, and March are cold enough, however, in Venice, and there were plenty of places where they would have been warmer and snugger than in that great gilded saloon of theirs, where such heat as was given out by the green earthenware stove seemed to make a duty of travelling straight upwards to the domed ceiling amongst the gods and goddesses sitting enthroned upon plump

plaster clouds, from which exalted sphere it descended, too effectually chilled to administer much comfort to the inferior beings sitting benumbed and shivering below.

Lady Frances was very fond of her Venetian apartment, however,—fonder than of any other abode which it would have been possible for her now to inhabit. She had become used too, and in her youth, to larger fluctuations of climate than any which even Venice can show, and was not therefore particularly sensitive on that score. The colonel her brother was of opinion indeed that there were many places in the world that would have been livelier to live in than the shores of the Adriatic. But then he was very fond of his sister: it was she who contributed the lion's share of their mutual housekeeping; she who took the whole trouble and responsibility of things in general off his hands; and he was therefore well content to follow her guidance,—so long, that is, as she did not insist upon dragging him quite away from the dear face of humanity—a piece of self-immolation of which he secretly believed her to be perfectly capable, and which he always held himself in readiness to combat should the occasion arise.

Colonel Hal Mowbray was an ex-Guardsman, a man of London and of the clubs, social to the very tips of his fingers, a *ci-devant* dandy, and a bit of a *bon viveur* too, though the latter happily nowadays of the most exemplarily domesticated type. He was an old bachelor, just as his sister was an old maid; and although no two people in the whole wide world could be found less alike, no two people upon the whole could have fitted better into each other's moods or combined to lead a more united,

if in some respect also a divided life. In their disunion, indeed, as in their affection, there was something quasi-matrimonial about them which was not a little diverting to their numerous friends, and which seemed to be borne out by their very names—Colonel and Lady Frances Mowbray: could anything be more absolutely suggestive of man and wife? Indeed in Venice—rather famous for malicious stories, and not always equally innocent ones—a tale is told of a lady who, having been introduced to the pair, was heard, upon their departure, calmly and audibly inquiring of her hostess what family they had, and whether the daughters were as excruciatingly ugly as their mother;—a piece of indiscreet inquisitiveness which was brought to a summary conclusion by the subdued but irresistible titterings of the assembled company!

Poor Lady Frances, if she had ever heard the anecdote—which, perhaps, who knows, she may have done—might fairly have retorted that she had been more of a mother than many mothers—only that neither self-laudation nor repartee were at all in her line. Standing there in the grey light of that wet Venetian afternoon, there was no doubt that she was a very ugly woman indeed—tall, grim, gaunt, stiff-backed; her hair, which was a dark iron-grey, put tightly back from her face, showing a breadth but likewise a height of forehead which even the very loveliest of her sex would hardly in these days have the hardihood to expose. A very ugly woman undeniably, and an ill-dressed one to boot, without any graces or manners to speak of; and yet no one, I think, could have looked at her without feeling that there was more about her than met the

eye. A good deal of past history was written in her face,—not merely the narrow, feminine, individual history, but something larger, something of past achievement; of important decision arrived at, important councils shared. Women's faces are less malleable, as a rule, than men's, which makes their portraits (setting aside the question of beauty) much the less interesting of the two. Lady Frances's face, however, was significant enough. It must have been a very stupid person indeed who failed to perceive at a glance that she had at some time or other filled a larger sphere than falls to the lot of most plain single women of fifty-four. So, in fact, it had been. Her father, John, fifth Earl of Loftsborough, had been a Governor-General of India in days when a Governor-Generalship meant more, at any rate upon the spot, than at present. Before that, again, he had been Governor-General of Canada, and in both capacities his daughter Frances had been his main strength and support. Ever since she was seventeen, at which age she had had the misfortune to lose her mother, whatever there had been to be done in the Mowbray family had, sooner or later, in fact, come to be done by Lady Frances. It had been a large family in those early days, though there were not many of them left now. They had never been rich, although they had always filled a considerable place in the world's estimation; indeed, had they been rich, Lord Loftsborough would in all probability never have accepted the posts that were successively offered him, for he was an indolent man, with a distinct disinclination to take the initiative in anything. It was Frances who worked him up to the point of doing so, not

merely for the sake of the pay, though that was acceptable enough, but still more for the sake of the work and the position which, upon the whole, suited him admirably, despite many groans and much unconquerably self-pity. His two younger daughters were both married before this part of his career began, so that although they and their husbands paid occasional visits both to India and to Canada, and tasted the sweets of viceregal life, and lent grace to its paste-board pageants, it was upon his elder daughter Frances that the whole stress, the whole seriousness, and, internally, the whole responsibility, of both posts lay.

It cannot be said, poor soul, that she had ever lent much grace to any pageants! and of this she had been always acutely conscious to the last quivering fibre of her ugly, ungainly person. She did not, because she could not, help to make of her father's court a very brilliant affair socially; but she did more, for it is doubtful whether without her at his elbow he would have been enabled to hold his own in it even a single day. In all things she was his secret adviser, his counsellor, his brain's carrier; there was not a single detail of his administration but what she knew the ins and the outs of it immeasurably better than he did himself. It was not so much ability with which she was required to supply him—he had plenty of his own, when he cared to exert it,—it was mainly the power of coming to a decision, and of keeping, moreover, to that decision when it was made. Constitutionally and physically, Lord Loftsborough was a man incapable of making up his mind, and to have to do so was to him at all times pain and grief unspeakable—an idiosyncrasy which he shared with all his house, and had be-

queathed, with one exception, to all his children.

Just as she was the one ugly member of a singularly handsome race, so Lady Frances Mowbray was the one known member of that distinguished and historic house who had ever yet been born with that distinctly desirable and advantageous qualification—a backbone. This lack of vertebral consistency among the others was, however, not by any means conspicuously evident. On the contrary, in few families was there more of dash and courage than amongst its men, more of social success and brilliancy than amongst its women; it was only upon the great occasions—the three or four crucial and all-decisive moments of life—that this congenital limpness had come out. Then it was that Frances rose to the front. Ever since she was seventeen, she had always been the pilot-boat in the storm; the one rock in the midst of much sand; the being to whom instinctively the whole family, with one accord, turned in an emergency. Her very disadvantages helped her here. Few very capable women possess the additional capability of being able to efface themselves at the right time, but here Frances shone. The most tactless of women under ordinary circumstances, her tact in this respect was infallible, and that for the simple reason that it was not really tact at all. Her instincts, no less than her wishes, had always been to efface herself; to do the work, whatever it might be, and to let who would wear the crowns and the credit. This may sound like the acme and incarnation of magnanimity, but in reality there was nothing particularly magnanimous about it. She *was* a magnanimous woman, but her magnanimity was not shown here.

To efface herself whenever such effacement was possible, *was* her one refuge, her one joy, her one solace. Poor soul, she *was* so ugly!

Now a man, let him be never so ugly, never so ungainly, has always the comfortable consciousness that his ugliness is hardly, after all, the most salient fact about him; other qualities and qualifications outweigh it, and tend to throw it in the shade. As he grows older, the impression wears off. The fact remains regrettable, no doubt, but still not a fact of any very great consequence after all. With a woman it is otherwise. Her ugliness, if she is ugly, becomes, from the moment she is aware of it, the salient fact of her existence—the nucleus of discomfort around which every other discomfort turns. She sees it in every face she meets as she walks about the streets; she reads it upon a hundred irreproachably polite lips; let her heroism, let her philosophy be what it may, no amount of heroism or of philosophy will avail entirely to root it out of her consciousness. In many respects Frances Mowbray—plain Frances Mowbray, as every one except her own nearest relations called her—had been infinitely better off than most equally ugly women. As long as he had lived, her father had seen to that. If she had eked out his flaccidity from her own reservoirs of strength, he upon the other hand, had thrown the shelter of his own splendid presence, the prestige of his own social charm, around the ugly, unattractive woman who called him father. As far as man can shelter woman—which is not perhaps saying a very great deal after all—Lady Frances Mowbray had been sheltered, not merely from anything like neglect, but from those

sharper because more insidious assaults which generally, it is to be feared, come to her from her own sex. Publicly or privately, no faintest intimation of that discomfort which even the kindest of fathers or brothers will at times show, had ever looked at her out of his handsome eyes. Had she been the loveliest of women, the fairest, the most engaging, he could not have shown a warmer pride in her or a keener desire to set her up in her pride of place, and to produce her to the world upon every occasion, suitable or unsuitable. Even this, poor soul, was part of her life's penance. She loved her father for it, but it added unspeakably to the difficulties of her life. The eternal, never-ending necessity of dressing up; making the best, so far as her indifferent lights enabled her, of the worst possible materials; continually presenting herself to fresh strangers; submitting to the scrutiny of new eyes; exercising the inevitable social genuflections and politeness; all this was a slow torture and a small martyrdom to the proud, capable, diffident woman, conscious of so much more than average abilities; of the kindest intentions; of a thousand lofty and heroic impulses; but, above and beyond everything else, conscious of that cardinal fact of her own irredeemable ugliness, which, whether others forgot it or not, was never out of her recollection for a single instant, and which had become to her a sort of second skin, hardly less clinging, and certainly no less difficult to escape from, than the first.

All this that I have been recounting was old history now, poor Lady Frances's worst social troubles being over and done with a good many years back. Soon after leaving India—almost, in fact,

before the reins of government dropped from his hands—Lord Loftsbrough's health had broken down rather suddenly, and the last six or seven years of his life had been spent quietly and uneventfully at his own estate in Suffolk, with occasional excursions to London or elsewhere, as the humour prompted him. When he died,—an event which had occurred about eight years before this little tale opens,—almost everything that it was in his power to leave, exclusive of such possessions as ought, rightfully if not legally, to go to the head of the house, was left to Lady Frances—a disposition which, to their honour be it said, not a single member of the family had been found to cavil at. The sisters had both married rich men, while of the five brothers only two were now left, and of these one was the present earl, to whom all the more solid possessions of the family naturally accrued; and the other was Colonel Hal, who had already a small fortune of his own, left to him by an uncle, who had always been his father's aide-de-camp, and practically, therefore, his sister's also, who was her especial double and second self, so that it was well understood that whatever was hers was, as a matter of course, his also. There was no house to leave excepting one at Brighton, where Lord Loftsbrough had spent a few months, and which he had taken into his head to buy, more as a speculation than as anything else. Lady Frances detested Brighton, and had, therefore, made haste to let the house, which for her held no associations or interest of any sort. Since that time she and the Colonel had lived about the world together, generally and by preference in Italy, the instant and never-

failing popularity of the brother balancing, and to some extent outweighing, the no less decided unpopularity of the sister. Not but what Lady Frances had her stout friends too, who would have gone to the stake in support of her excellences; but these trusty souls were scattered, and for the most part silent, and the general vote of society was distinctly adverse. She did not covet its suffrages much. She had done her duty in that respect in early days, and might fairly therefore, she held, claim exemption now. Colonel Mowbray—who shared with his father the amiable quality of ignoring his sister's social disabilities—was never tired of remonstrating with her upon this point; and at Venice hardly an evening passed without an amicable dispute between them on the matter, as a sort of prelude and preparatory to the Colonel's own departure. She was a perfect "orsa," he would declare, striding indignantly up and down under the lamplight. Why would she not accompany him this evening—just this one evening—to the Comtesse de B., or the Principessa S., as the case might be? She needn't stay long—only look in for an hour or two—and the poor Principessa was *so* fond of her! She was always talking to him about her, and would be particularly hurt at her not coming! Really it wasn't kind!

Whereat Lady Frances would smile and shake her head, looking at her brother the while a trifle sceptically out of those deep-set brown eyes of hers, which were the only approach to an attraction in her poor plain face. Yes, it was quite true, she was an "orsa," she admitted placidly; and being so, was it not better to let her remain behind, and growl quietly

alone in her own den, instead of spoiling Comtesse B.'s or Principessa S.'s rooms by growling about them? When people, women especially, had attained a certain age,—she did not say when they were grotesquely ugly, for that she was aware by long experience awakened a storm of indignant protest,—it was better for them to remain quietly at home in their own shells, instead of taking up the room of those who were younger and brighter and livelier than they.

To these arguments, however frequently put forward, the Colonel would invariably proffer indignant opposition, but in the end,—finding that opposition produced no perceptible effect,—he would call for his gondola and disappear down some one or other of the many watery ways, while she would remain by the fire or the open window, as the case might be, or reading her book by the lamplight which left so many dark corners in the large, over large, room. She never wished that he would return to her sooner than he did. If she felt sleepy, she went to bed; if not, she sat up until he returned, and waited for his report of the evening. She took the liveliest interest in the sayings and doings of her neighbours, as is not unfrequently the case with people who shrink from confronting them much in their own persons. To sit at home and to receive her brother's report upon his return, was to her perception quite wild and hilarious festivity.

The Colonel, too, was a good *raconteur*,—not picturesque, but fairly vivid; a quality due partly to his indomitable freshness of enjoyment, which was a gift direct from the gods, partly to a long habit of retaining and retailing such items in his character of

social purveyor. He knew everybody, and something about everybody, and if not endowed with any very remarkable degree of perspicuity, could still put two and two together in a sufficiently satisfactory fashion. Lady Frances would sit, and nod her head, and blink her eyes, and make her own deductions, not always quite in the same direction. She, too, could put two and two together, though with results different often from her brother's. In this way she gathered or guessed more about the people that surrounded her than half those who spent every night of their lives in their company. She exercised herself in these small matters, having, in truth, no larger ones now upon which she could exercise herself, and possessing a fund of human interest which craved employment. No doubt she often perceived a good deal more than there was to perceive—endowing her neighbours with an array of qualities and intentions, which would considerably have astonished their worthy minds, had they been capable of seeing into hers; but at least it did nobody any very great harm. It was a fashion of composing fiction, more satisfactory, perhaps, upon the whole, than that of reducing it to pen and ink, for the substructure, at any rate, was bound to be solid, and if the edifice raised was loftier and of larger proportions than the facts warranted, why, then, so much the worse obviously for the latter, and the better for the imagination of the builder!

One thing these sociological studies, carried on through the twofold medium of her brother and her Venetian neighbours, certainly did not do, and that was to embitter or make her cynical. She was not a single atom cynical, poor soul, or even cross, however

libellously her face might sometimes report upon her in this respect: the enthusiasms of youth were combined to a great degree indeed in her with the tolerance of age and a capacity for self-detachment, rarer perhaps than either. But, then, as no human being (excepting to a limited extent, her own family) ever gave her credit for anything of the sort, it is obvious that, for all practical purposes, it might nearly as well have been non-existent.

She was waiting for her brother now, he having gone out three or four hours before to breakfast with a friend, and having not yet returned. She rather wished, on this occasion, that he would come back, as he was somewhat given to catching colds, through one of which she had already had to nurse him only that very spring. A gondola, it is true, is a good safe coach, and of course the gondola had its *felze*, or covering on. Still the rain, which had hardly begun when her brother had left, had now come on heavily, and threatened continuance, and had brought with it a chill wind, which was apt to find its way even through the best fitted apertures. The Colonel, too, had a jaunty, young-mannish way of ignoring the very possibility of his catching cold, which added not a little to his sister's anxieties on his behalf. Yes, she really wished, she thought, that he would come.

Finding that he did not do so, she went back after a while to her own particular seat in an angle between the fireplace and the window, and took up a book; but the book dropped presently on to her lap, and she took to thinking, dreaming, rather, open-eyed, over scenes, bygone scenes, many of which seemed to her now very little more real than if they had

literally happened in dreams. She got tired at last of this exercise also, as well as of sitting alone in that great white and gold *sala* of hers—surrounded by, and as it were embedded in, that peculiar Venetian silence which is unlike any other silence in the world, and which at present was broken only by a vague sound of dropping water, which might quite conceivably have come from the inside of one of the great Tintorettoish pictures upon the walls, so vague and so all-pervading was it. She got up accordingly again, and went into an ante-room, where there were two windows, one of which looked into a square space or court in the middle of the houses. Here there was nothing at all vague or indistinct in the sound of the water. The sides of the court were pierced all round by irregularly-shaped windows, protected by iron gratings; and below, the court itself opened on the Mowbrays' side into a vaulted room, columned and glazed—a sort of glorified boat-house—where the gondoliers sat and discussed high matters connected with their craft, and opposite to which was a broad outside staircase leading to the main door of the apartment. A circular hole was visible in the centre of the flagging, and towards this a perfect cataract of rain-water was at that moment descending. Every pipe in every wall all round the court was discharging its contents with a will: one would have said there was a regular organised assault, directed from all sides upon a given point. Faces, attracted by the uproar, peered inquisitively out of the windows of the other houses in every variety of head-gear, and through every variety of scrolled and twisted grating. Lady Frances drew back into the ante-room when she perceived these other faces. It

was not from any dislike of her neighbours, but from an old sensitiveness of hers to observation, which seemed to increase rather than to diminish as she grew older. The other and opposite window of the ante-room looked out upon a small flagged *campo*, at the end of which there was a *traghetto*, or ferry, where, for the sum of three-farthings, you might be ferried over to the opposite side. All day long in fine weather this was thronged with gondoliers and passengers, streaming backwards and forwards to the one side or the other. At present a single sickly and gloomy looking man, in black cloth clothes, and without an umbrella, was seated there all alone, huddled upon the bench, and resignedly accepting the pelting rain upon his shoulders; while a solitary gondola, propelled by an old man with a sack slung cloak fashion around him, was slowly making his way across to him from the opposite side of the canal—a sort of modern version of Charon and the river Styx, drawn out in lamp-black and Indian ink.

Lady Frances had not been standing very long at this window before she heard a sound of voices coming up from the vaulted regions underneath, and craned her neck over to see who the new comers were. It was, as she saw to her satisfaction, Colonel Hal, and with him were two young men, friends of his, who stopped, however, at the foot of the stairs, and were not to be persuaded to mount, in spite of reiterated proffers of hospitality upon his part.

"She won't—upon the contrary, she'll be delighted, I assure you," she heard her brother say. "Come in, and I'll make you a glass of sherry-cobbler. Nothing like sherry-cobbler upon a wet day."

"Not to-day, thank you, Colonel. We're bound to be back at the Loricellas' immediately. Halliburton, too, mustn't run any more risks with that sacred throat of his. Besides, I'm sure Lady Frances wouldn't thank us for bringing in all this water upon her carpets."

"Oh, Frances won't mind; she never minds anything of that sort," her brother asseverated confidently. But the young men apparently were not to be persuaded, for she heard their steps retreating down the stone steps.

"Any message for the widow, Colonel?" the one who had before spoken called back laughingly, as they were passing back under the low archway. "We shall be seeing her, you know, in ten minutes time at the Loricellas'."

Colonel Hal laughed a little consciously. "You'd much better come back and have that sherry-cobbler," was all the reply he made.

Lady Frances at her window on the top of the stairs listened to this dialogue and waited, ready to step back into the drawing-room should her brother prove to be accompanied by his friends. Sometimes, at the very bottom of her soul, she could not help wishing that he was not *quite* so fond of very young men's society. She could not help thinking that they were apt to laugh a little at his ultra-youthfulness, which was so much greater than their own, and that a staid, a less sociable demeanour, would have been more consonant with his standing, and the dignity of his forty-nine years.

"After all, though, he did look younger than any of them," she thought reluctantly, as the Colonel's broad handsome face and magnificent auburn beard appeared at the doorway. "And *how* much better looking!"

"Dear, you're dreadfully wet, aren't you?" she said, hurrying forward, and running her hands anxiously up and down his coat-sleeve. "Do, please, go and change. I know that you will get that cold of yours back again."

"Oh no, nothing, nothing at all to signify, I assure you,—it was only coming up the stairs. I had the *felze* all the time, you know. It was a downpour, though, wasn't it? And by the way, Frances, I told Baldassare and the other man—the new one with a squint—that they should have a glass of cognac each to warm them. Poor devils, they're streaming, and they hadn't their mackintoshes either."

"Of course, dear. Tell Watkins what you want, and he'll send it down to the gondolier's room. But do go first and change your own things, there's a dear boy," she added, entreatingly. "I've got a bit of fire in the red drawing-room for you when you come back," she added. "It was so raw, that I thought you'd be glad of it."

"That's right—I'm glad you have; and I'll put on my smoking-suit. No one will be likely to call on us such an afternoon as this, so there's no fear of being caught!" he added with his genial laugh as he disappeared through the doorway.

Lady Frances smiled a little to herself after he had gone. She did not believe in her heart of hearts that the Colonel would have been so very much discomposed if any one had even come in after all, and caught him in that brown-plush suit of his with crimson *rèvers*, which suited his breadth and stalwart fairness to the full as well as ever similar combinations suited those swarthier Venetians who crowd the background of so many a sacred picture. After

all, there was no question but what they enjoyed their bravery, she thought, so why not he? She was full of these self-debatings—half-critical, half-admiring—which never came to anything, for they were all sufficiently answered beforehand.

When her brother returned, she had put an extra log upon the fire, which had sprung up into a brisk blaze, awakening picturesque gleams upon every object capable of such response. The Colonel himself might fairly have been added to the category, as he came hastily in, rubbing his hands, and flung himself into a great leather-covered armchair, displacing as he did so a piece of heavy red and gold brocade which was hanging over the top. "This is snug, Fan; there's nothing like home, is there, after all!" he said, stretching out a pair of embroidered slippers to the blaze. His sister picked up the brocade and hung it upon the back of a sofa, then sat down in her own particular chair on the other side of the stove, looking at him with that mixture of affection and admiration in her eyes which was specially reserved for the men of her own family. This one before her was certainly the best embodiment left now, for her eldest brother was already grey and a trifle gouty, while his sons took after their mother, who was thin-lipped, dark-browed, and short, not one of them showing a trace even of that generous breadth and brilliant colouring which were the distinguishing traits of the Mowbrays.

"And your music, how did it go off?" she asked, after he had lighted his cigarette and begun to puff at it. "I hope the damp didn't get into any of their throats?"

"Capitally. Not a bit. Young

Halliburton, especially, was splendid. Such chest notes! Too bad, isn't it, that his people won't hear of his going upon the stage? He came back with me just now; so did young Maitland Majoribanks. I asked them both in, but they were rather in a hurry. They were going on to the Loricellas'."

"Yes; I heard them," his sister answered. "Oh, and by the way, who was the widow?" she added suddenly, the recollection of the last fragment of the dialogue coming all at once back upon her mind.

"The widow?" Colonel Mowbray laughed, a laugh of some embarrassment, brushing up his beard with his hand as he did so, as if inconvenienced by its luxuriance. "What widow do you mean, Frances?" he asked carelessly.

"I don't know; I heard them ask you if you had any message to send to the widow. That was all," she replied, unsuspectingly.

"Ah, yes, I remember now. Mrs Markham they meant. They were expecting to meet her at the Loricellas', you know."

"Markham? Is she anything to those Markhams we knew in India—Dorsetshire people, I think? One of them was quartered at Bangalore. His wife, you may remember, was sent up to Simla, and had the measles, and I took in the children,—nice little trots of four and five, with a horribly disagreeable ayah. I wonder what has become of them? They must be nearly grown up by this."

"Oh no, nothing at all to say to those people," her brother answered hastily. "She is not English at all, though she speaks it splendidly. She's a Russian."

"A Russian! But the name is English surely?"

"Yes, the husband, I suppose, was an Englishman, or an Amer-

ican, or something or another. No one seems to know anything about him. He is dead, anyhow. She was a Princess Matrena Sladimirovitch—in her own right, you know. She might call herself so, I believe, if she chose, only she doesn't care to do so."

"Well, the other is shorter, isn't it?" Lady Frances said, with a smile. "She doesn't live here, does she? I don't seem to have ever heard the name?"

"Oh dear no; she is only just come. She has never been here before. She's been spending the winter at Florence. I met her there when I was with the Menzikoffs. She is a cousin, I think, of theirs. She goes to London, and is very well off,—tremendously rich, in fact,—and knows lots of people. She is staying at the Britannia."

The Colonel rather rattled over these facts as if anxious to get to some more interesting subject, which was to be attained upon the other side. When he had got through them, however, the other and more interesting subject seemed to fade into abeyance, for a silence ensued, which was only broken by the muffled splashing of the rain, the crackling and the sputtering of pieces of wood in the stove, and an occasional hoarse-throated cry of *Poppe! poppe!* from the *traghetto* underneath the windows.

He returned to it, however, later in the afternoon. They had gone out together upon the balcony, the rain being for the moment over, and Venice having put on that air of glossy and gleamy invitation which she is apt to assume at such moments, which becomes her better perhaps than any other. Away to the *lagunes*, and out beyond San Giorgio, the waterways were all of a dim greeny bronze; the sky, too, was dimly green with broad flushes of

white, and near the horizon, salmon. The very house-fronts had a newly washed glow and gloss upon them; the bleached and sun-wasted shutters, once also green, having taken a pale glaucous hue, like the back of some half-withered beech-leaf. Backwards and forwards between the two glows the black boats scudded and shot deftly past, suggesting insects newly risen upon the surface of some pond. The sense of life and recovered movement was strong, though for the most part it was a silent bustle, save indeed down at the *traghetto*, where the men were busily baling out their boats and retailing their adventures during the storm. How it rained! how it blew! how flashes of lightning had burst from behind San Stefano! Pietro had lost his hat, and Antonetto his oar! Two of Lady Frances's gondoliers were leaning against a wall, looking on at the labours of their fellows with that supercilious satisfaction in remunerative idleness in which no London lackey ever excelled them. "Lazy dogs!" the Colonel said, with his genial laugh. Then—"Apropos of what we were talking of, Frances, I wish you'd call upon Mrs Markham," he added abruptly.

She looked up at him, wondering rather at the connection of ideas, but not saying so. "Do you, dear? Then, of course I will," she said. "I so seldom call on any one, though, do I? Any new person, I mean."

"No, I know, and it's a great mistake on your part; I'm always telling you so. You might as well live in a box, every bit. There's nothing, believe me, like seeing lots of new people, to keep one's self from getting rusty."

Lady Frances smiled. "I always was rusty," she said. "But why do you particularly want me

to call upon this Mrs Markham?" she added.

"I don't know exactly. Somehow, I think you'd suit; I'd like, too, to see what you thought of her. She's a wonderful woman—quite extraordinary. Rather silent, you know, but tremendously clever, I believe, at bottom. As to her beauty, it's amazing—I never saw anything like it in my life; and she can paint, too, and sing, and speak four or five languages if she chooses. I know you'd suit."

Lady Frances laughed a little, and shook her head. "I doubt it myself, it all sounds much too brilliant," she said.

"Oh yes, she's brilliant, of course," her brother replied, rather in the tone of one who concedes a damaging admission. "I don't see how she's to help it, though. She was born so. Some women are."

"Does she want to help it, do you suppose?"

"I don't know whether she does or not, but it makes the other women down upon her, don't you know. They say she's proud and odd—I don't know what

all—though, for the life of me, what there is odd in being rich and beautiful, or in speaking four or five languages, I can't see. Do you?"

"Well, no, I certainly cannot. But then, you know, they say I'm odd too, if that's any satisfaction; though, I'm not beautiful, and I *don't* speak four or five languages."

"Yes, but that is quite different, of course. Everybody knows all about you, and you've been here a long time, and everything, whereas Mrs Markham has only just come; so that it would be a sort of civility—give her the freedom of the place, don't you see?"

"Oh," Lady Frances replied, uttering that comprehensive monosyllable slowly, and with more gravity in her tone than she had used before. Then, when the silence between them had lasted about a minute—"Of course, if you *really* wish me to call upon her, Hal, I will," she added; "only don't forget to remind me."

"Never you fear, I'll remind you fast enough," the Colonel responded positively.

CHAPTER II.

The next day was Sunday—a mild day, with spaces of blue sky overhead—ushered in, like every Venetian Sunday that ever yet came into being, with tumultuous crashings of bells, as though the ringers' aim and object had been to tear down and rive the very belfries. All the time Lady Frances was tying on her bonnet for church the crashing and clanging never ceased for a single instant. It made her head ache, though she ought certainly to have been used to it by this time.

The English church at Venice is, as most people are aware, upon an

upper floor of one of the palaces on the Grand Canal,—a palace formerly belonging to the Contarini, now given up to *appartamenti mobigliati*, and rooms full of indifferent antiquities, a card for which is mysteriously thrust into your hand as you enter in to or leave your devotions. The "church" is a long and rather handsome room, with the usual frescoed ceiling, with portraits of senators and other notabilities—presumably of the house of Contarini—stuck in green painted wooden panels, with windows half-filled with coarsely stained blue

glass, between which the delicious green of a vine enters in spring-time at all the open apertures. Upon a Sunday morning it is a sufficiently varied admixture of two or three nationalities, and more than one "ism;" the senators overhead in their red and green velvets, looking down with all the tolerance of indifference at the heretic rites carried on under their noses, not so very heretic nowadays, perhaps, either. At ten o'clock, precisely as the clock struck, Lady Frances's gondola was always at the door upon a Sunday morning, and she herself was seated in it. It was not very often that she succeeded in inducing the Colonel to accompany her, but that had nothing to do with the matter: it is upon the women of a family, as is well known, that the duty of supporting the religious institutions of their country rightfully and naturally devolves.

All the incongruities of incongruous Venice might have seemed, to an ingenious and slightly satirical looker-on, typified and embodied in that long angular figure of hers, sitting so bolt upright upon cushions specially designed for luxurious reclining; her big prayer-book and well-worn brown Bible upon her knees; her grey hair smoothed in two impartial bands upon either side of her two thin cheeks; her long nose, her sad, kind eyes, looking thoughtfully out at the scene, so familiar yet so fresh. The water slipped and slid in green delicious transparent wrinkles under the shallow prow of the boat; the *ferro* lifted its hooked and gleaming curves of steel above the surface; the gondoliers had donned their fresh suits of summer white, with the broad red sashes fringed with gold, which Colonel Hal had himself devised for their adornment.

Swallows swooped and swooped, pursuing the reluctant mosquito to the very brink of the water; *vaporetti*, crowded with Sunday pleasers bound for the Lido, passed and repassed, sending a disturbing wave across the whole level breadth of water, washing the bases of the houses up to heights never formerly attained to, save at some exceptional flood-time.

An hour and a half later Lady Frances was coming back from her devotions amongst a crowd of gondolas also freighted with churchgoers, when her attention was attracted by a collision—that rarest of incidents in Venice—which had taken place between one of the advancing boats and another which had suddenly shot out of one of the side canals. It was only a momentary touch; the next instant both had separated again—rowers and rowed, offenders and offended alike, looking back at one another with that indomitable good-humour which reduces all mishaps into a mere succession of entertaining incidents. In that moment Lady Frances recognised her brother as one of the two occupants of the offending vessel, and with him a lady who, as she turned to speak to him, she perceived to be young, strikingly handsome, and moreover a stranger to herself.

Now Venetian etiquette, which is not as a rule by any means unendurably stringent, is nevertheless a stickler upon some few points, and one of those few is, that a lady shall not go alone in a gondola with a gentleman—that gentleman being neither father, brother, husband, or other near relative. Who could this lady, who was thus honouring her brother, be? Lady Frances wondered. Whoever she was, there was no question about her beauty. She was blonde to the point of in-

sipidity, or would have been but for the well-defined eyebrows and eyelashes which gave distinction and definition to the face. Around her hat a quantity of dark grey gauze had been twisted, which, meeting under the chin, brought out the wonderful tints of the face with marvellous distinctness. One hand was bare, and the lace of the sleeve hung back a little way from the wrist and arm. If there was anything condescending in the lady's position, there was certainly nothing at all so in her air and attitude. A Cleopatra or Semiramis, in presence of one of the least of her vassals, could hardly have carried a prouder port. The image of some very large white swan contemptuously breasting the waves rose to Lady Frances's mind, as she looked at the gondola and its beautiful occupant. Who in the world could she be? she wondered, with not a little curiosity. Venice is a small place, and though no very great frequenter of its entertainments, she knew most of its inmates by sight, and felt sure that this magnificent blonde had never come under her observation before. Suddenly she remembered her brother's panegyrics of the preceding evening. Evidently this was she—the all-accomplished Russian, over whose perfections he had waxed so eloquent, and whom she herself stood solemnly pledged to call upon. It must be, seeing that there was no one else whom it could by any possibility be.

It was not until the two gondolas had passed that the Colonel caught sight of his sister: then he half started up from his seat, pulling aside the striped curtains, and flourishing in the air with two or three outstretched fingers, as if to convey an embrace—not directly to her, but upwards to something poised in mid-air above her head.

Lady Frances on her side nodded and smiled her own peculiarly shy, constrained smile—which was shy and constrained even towards her own brother, when by chance they met in public. She saw the lady beside him glance languidly in her direction, and turn to the Colonel evidently with an inquiry upon her lips, and was witness to the air of polite but unmistakable astonishment with which the answer was received. Then the two gondolas passed on, and not many minutes later Lady Frances was set down at the steps of their own palazzo.

She waited luncheon half an hour for her brother, then, as he did not appear, went on without him. She had nearly finished when a hasty line was brought in, telling her that he had been caught and detained by friends at the Hotel Britannia; they were going out to the Lido that afternoon, he said, and she was not to expect to see him, therefore, until dinner-time.

She was still in the act of reading this when a visitor was announced, and she hastened accordingly into the other room to receive her.

Signora, or, as she much preferred being called, Madame Facchino, was one of those striking little social phenomena of whose antecedents no human being knows anything, or apparently troubles him or her self to know. A Belgian, it was said, by birth, married to a Neapolitan, speaking English with hardly an accent, though with a good many variations of her own, she was to be met everywhere; she knew everybody. She lived up two flights of stairs in a dingy little furnished lodging, permeated by the noises of a *café*, which was held below. She was reported excessively poor, and in fact made little or no secret of being so.

No one, not even the rare Belgians who visited Venice, knew anything whatsoever of her or her family. Her husband was assumed to be dead, but who or what he had been when alive, no one was bold enough to pronounce with any positive certainty. She was not particularly refined; indeed very fastidious people pronounced her to be downright vulgar. She was excessively plain, with a little, short, crumpled face, not unlike that of an intelligent marmoset, and a dense, far from neatly arranged, crop of black hair, which overhung her forehead to the very eyebrows. The eyes beneath this dishevelled thatch were small, and of an unmistakable green. She sang with infinite *chic* and *gusto*, but without a scrap of voice, accompanying herself by preference upon a cracked mandoline which she carried about with her, and she was universally popular. Yet she was not clever, and, what was perhaps still more remarkable, not even ill-natured,—at least few malicious stories had ever been supposed to find their first traceable point of dissemination from between her lips.

Lady Frances had somehow, incongruously enough, drifted into a sort of intimacy with her, owing chiefly to a pertinacious sociability upon the other's part, which no coldness, however pronounced, could daunt. To one so shy as she was it was a comfort undeniably to have some one near at hand who would take the whole burden of conversation upon herself, in whose society no uncomfortable pauses could by any possibility occur, nor any embarrassment upon the part of another throw even a momentary film of diffidence upon her own absolute equanimity. She was used, moreover, to having people upon whom she could exercise benevolence, and Madame Facchino

was fortunately quite willing to play the indispensable second part in that amiable duet. Thus, for very various reasons, it had come to pass that the little Belgian was one of the very few people in Venice who had established themselves upon a footing of intimacy at the Palazzo Goppo—indeed, had become, to some degree, a sort of necessity to both its inmates, though for very dissimilar reasons. Now and then, it is true, for a moment, for the space of a few seconds, she brushed against a prejudice, or touched the spring of that indomitable pride which lay, like a sort of subterranean frost, far below all Lady Frances's liberalities, real as well as imaginary. But Madame Facchino had a very fair endowment of tact; she was aware in an instant of the danger, and made haste to sheer off again into safe waters, without ever actually touching bottom. She took a good deal of pride out of her intimacy with this gaunt, dull, capable Englishwoman, whom everybody respected, if everybody also a little laughed at. Though not distinctly lying under the accusation of Bohemianism, there was something undoubtedly comfortable and reputable to one of her precarious antecedents to be upon intimate terms with one who belonged to that unimpeachable order which stands like a rock, above and beyond all changes and chances even of fortune. If she would scarcely have undertaken to emulate its ways in her own person, she at least appreciated the results, and would not at all have minded filching a little of its prestige. She might be a trifle vulgar herself, but she had a taste, almost a passion, for the niceties and the comforts of refinement.

"So I find you alone, my Lady! that is good," she said, as she came

tripping forward upon a pair of small, very accurately shod feet, taking in with a sharp glance every alteration that had been made in the disposition of the rooms since her last visit. She always called Lady Frances "my Lady,"—at first because, like the majority of foreigners, she believed it to be the customary English mode of address; afterward, because it had become a habit to do so. "And the Colonel—the devoted brother—he is out? Yes? That is well too. Then now we will have a nice chat. Ah, he is gone to the Hotel Britannia. *Tiens! tiens!* Then he is in the train of the new beauty. Oh, do not deny it. I have seen him, in fact—seen him with my two eyes,—they are small, but they are very sharp; indeed, for the matter of that, *he* is large enough, *n'est pas?* He is not alone either; all Venice seems to be *en délire*. Young de Fallet, Comte Carolan, Mrs Forsyth's son—they are all in a string—they rave day and night of her charms. And, after all, it is not so much to be wondered at. Let us be candid. She is a beauty, but a beauty *hors ligne*. You have seen her, my Lady? No?"

"Yes, I believe I have seen her," Lady Frances said rather stiffly. "I have promised in any case to call on her," she added.

"So. She will like that, though she is not by way of liking ladies. She knows more gentlemen than ladies."

"Why does she not know ladies? Is there anything—anything odd about her?" Lady Frances asked with some quickness.

"Odd? No, there is nothing odd,—not exactly to say odd. She did not like her husband, but there is nothing so very odd in that; he was probably not much to be liked. She does not take the trouble to talk to ladies; she likes everything

to come to her without her having the trouble to go to it. She likes clever men; they tell her what is going on without her having to read the newspapers. They talk to her about politics; then she feels herself clever, which she is not at all, not in the least. People call her a Russian spy, but that is all nonsense."

Lady Frances felt unconsciously relieved at this information. With all her sisterly devotion, she did not look upon the Colonel as, strictly speaking, belonging to the category of clever men, nor likely to minister much to any one's desire for political enlightenment.

"They say now that she means to marry again; that she is looking about amongst her *prétendants* for the right man." Madame Facchino went on carelessly, taking up a book which lay on the table beside her, and opening it to look at the title-page. "She says, too, I am told, that she will not marry an Englishman—that she has had enough of that nationality; that she must try another next time. That, too, one may believe if one likes. All I can say is, if she took my advice she would. They say that I am a perfect Anglophile, that I have forsworn my own nationality, and it is true. I talk the English, I read it, I even try to think in it, but that is difficult, I must own. This is new, is it not? *Ouida*. Ah! how I love *cette chère Madame Ouida*. She is so beautiful, so true, so strong! You have read it, my Lady? Ah! it belongs to the Colonel. Well, then, that is all the better, for I will not ask you to lend it to me, as I had meant to do. Now I must go; I only just ran in to say, do you receive to-night? and if so, may I come about ten? Come to dinner? Ah no, I will not really come to

dinner ; you must not ask me to-night ; it is too much, too often. I am ashamed, quite, quite ashamed. I blush, I do indeed ; you do it to save my little *pot-au-feu* ; is it not so ? Well, you are too good,—then I will. The Colonel, he will be at home to-night ? Yes ? That is well too. I will sing him some little songs ; he is so kind, the Colonel !” And with an eloquent grimace of gratitude which had the effect of screwing up her small eyes nearly to the point of extinction, Madame Facchino was gone.

After her loquacious visitor had departed, Lady Frances sat for a long time immersed in thought. She felt undeniably disturbed at these suggestions that had been thrown out rather than actually formulated. Her brother's marriage was an idea that had at one time been constantly before her mind, and had occupied her much. She had been desirous that he should marry, and had even, upon one occasion, taken in hand to supply him with a suitable wife, —a piece of manœuvring which, to any one acquainted with Lady Frances, it is needless to say came to nothing. As his father's aide-de-camp in chief, and the most popular man in or about the viceregal court, Captain Mowbray had had flirtations without end. How he had avoided matrimony it was rather difficult to say, except that the family irresolution had usually set in at the last moment to hinder him from making any explicit declarations.

For years back, although the flirtations had continued almost without cessation, none of them had appeared to tend towards matrimony, and he seemed to have as little serious intentions in that direction as his sister had herself. She did not like to think that

any merely personal considerations mingled with the dislike which the idea of his now doing so certainly inspired her ; and yet there was no denying that it would be a terrible break up, a most cruel wrenching and disjuncting of all that made the happiness of her present life, if now, at the twenty-third hour, her brother was to take it into his head to marry. Why, after all, should he do so, having delayed so long ? she asked herself with some asperity. But again, upon the other hand, why should he not ? He was the best judge of what was or was not for his own happiness ; and to a man of forty-nine, life as a personally romantic affair is naturally not finished and done with, as it is to a woman of fifty-two. Clearly the thing was conceivable ; and if the Colonel wished to embark upon matrimony with a rich, a beautiful, and a well-born woman, and the rich, beautiful, and well-born woman was willing to abet him in the matter, it was hardly, Lady Frances felt, his sister's part to stand in the way.

Meantime that there was not much to be done by brooding over the matter was evident. The sun was shining, the water sparkling ; Venice the Consoler was calling aloud with her myriad voices, “Come out ! Come out ! Come out !” Accordingly she ordered her *sandolo* to be at the door in ten minutes' time, and went into her own room to get ready. After all, the thing foreseen is not the thing that happens, she said to herself philosophically, and it was quite conceivable that she might be giving herself a great deal of very unnecessary trouble. When the number of hair-breadth escapes which the Colonel had already had in the matrimonial direction were taken into consideration, it seemed but a

fair deduction from the known to the unknown, to conclude that he would in all probability have a few more still.

Lady Frances, who was not young even for her age, had one youthful fancy left, and that was that she delighted in being rowed about Venice in her *sandolo*—as those light canoe-like boats are called, which stand in much the same relation to a gondola that a London hansom does to a four-wheeled cab. This particular *sandolo* was a very perfect little craft of its kind, and was rowed by a youth rejoicing in the immortal name of Michael Angelo, who was his mistress's private and particular henchman, and her favourite of all her household. To look at, Michael Angelo was not wholly unworthy of the name he bore, which, it will be owned, is saying a good deal. He was a beautiful youth, with one of those thrice-fortunate faces, more common in Italy than elsewhere, which seem endowed by Heaven with the enviable prerogative of expressing any sentiment, however amiable or lofty, with which its owner may chance to be momentarily inspired. Whether this Michael Angelo's soul was quite equal to the capabilities of his face, it is perhaps unnecessary to inquire too curiously. Gratitude the latter certainly did express, and that in no stinted measure, whenever his eyes rested upon his patroness. Lady Frances had picked him up upon one of those barges which bring firewood and planks to Venice from the mainland, where he, as a boy of twelve, had been kept working all the day, and often half the night too, for a few pence and the food of a masterless dog. In the contours of his throat, as well as in the great eyes that were almost too large for the face, there were

signs, even still, that told of the early pinch of starvation: they were not enough, however, to impair their beauty,—rather they enhanced it with a touch of wistfulness which otherwise would have been wanting. In his well-fitting gondolier's summer dress of white linen, with the red sash weighted with gold fringe, which swung to and fro like a pendulum with every motion of his graceful body; in his small cap of red cloth, under and 'around which his black hair curled like the tendrils of the bryony, he might have been set by a painter to ply an oar in the barge of Queen Venus herself. People in Venice, to whom the pair were as well known as the two Colossi upon the steps of the Doge's palace, used to laugh when they saw them passing, pointing them out to one another with loud-voiced open-mouthed comments, not maliciously, but audaciously, like schoolboys, to whom everything under heaven is obviously given as food for them to exercise their wits upon.

Lady Frances was well accustomed to these comments, and she did not really mind them, though, from habit and shyness, she often looked cross enough, poor soul, in vulgar parlance, "to frighten the horses," had there been any such animals in Venice to be frightened. A momentary ray of benevolence—a spark of goodness, of which she herself was hardly conscious—was about the only manifestation of the woman within which ever succeeded in finding its way through that impenetrable husk of ugliness behind which all her finer and better qualities lay shrouded. Everything else was locked up, swathed, unexpressed, like some tropical plant stowed away in a dark cellar, whose potential wealth of beauty is forbidden to produce so much as a leaf.

She had been rowing about the *lagunes* for nearly half-an-hour, when it suddenly occurred to her that she would pay a Sunday visit to a very old friend of hers, Princess Vasarhely, a Hungarian, who lived in a garden upon the Guidecca; and she accordingly gave orders to Michael Angelo to convey her to the canal of that name.

Princess Vasarhely was probably at that moment the oldest social institution left in Venice. Others had come, had flourished, and had passed away, but she had always remained. She had lived there, it was said, right through the whole of the later Austrian occupation, and had been the centre, for years, of everything, the rallying-point for three or four contending nationalities, including even a few Italians, who, of all native-born Austrian subjects, had made a solitary exception in her favour. She was not very young even in those days, but she was very old indeed now—people said in her hundreds, but that no doubt was an exaggeration. She was a tiny, white, wizened woman, very shrewd, very autocratic, very intolerant of contradiction; wearing always a small white quilted satin cap, made like a baby's, and tied in a tight knot under her chin. She talked English, and indeed most European languages,—preferring French,—and in every language mincing her words up into the smallest possible pieces before uttering them, which she did with the very ends of her lips, out of regard presumably for her teeth. Wildly romantic tales were told of her youth. She had been marvellously beautiful; men had gone mad for love of her; and duels innumerable had been fought for the sake of her smiles. Her husband, according to one malicious report, had been the most complacent of men, and she had

taken full advantage of his amiability, though never, it was admitted, derogating from her position as a *grande dame* and leader of her world. She looked quiet enough now at any rate! The underlying volcanoes were all smoothed and smothered decorously away under a thick superimposed layer of grey ashes. The complacent husband was dead long ago, and had given up his last breath in the arms of his adored and irresistible wife. Even that event lay already as much as twenty-five years back, and about the same time the Princess had bought for herself this garden and vineyard upon the Guidecca, close under the shadow of the beautiful Redentore, had filled it with birds, beasts, and flowers, and here she still lived with a deaf elderly companion, who was herself the successor of one who had died some ten years back of old age.

In addition to this house in the garden, the Princess possessed also a suite of rooms on the Grand Canal, but these she rarely occupied—had not indeed been off the Guidecca now for more than a year past. The little house near the Redentore was her home, her palace, her last throne. It was cold enough there—bitterly cold, in fact, in the winter time; but with stoves at every corner, and two or three quilted *portières* to every door, the Princess continued to keep her old blood warm, and to cater for the comfort of her innumerable pets. Every day in the year, whenever the weather permitted, she was taken out at three o'clock in her big-wheeled chair, and sat under the trees the whole afternoon, feeding her birds and fat spaniel with bonbons, and receiving every one who came to see her. Her visitors were not very numerous now, for she had

survived all her old links, and even those who had succeeded these had in their turn mostly passed away—the result being that to Venice and Venetian society at large she had become a tradition rather than a reality. Her eyes were a little weak, so that she looked generally more than half asleep, but her mind was never really asleep; her intuitions were wonderful, and she had never been known to make a mistake in her life. Her memory swept like a scythe over a stretch of some seventy years, and there was hardly a face nor a fact which she had forgotten in all that time. She had been in early days the most intimate friend of Lady Frances's mother, who had spent much of her youth in Vienna, where her father was ambassador, and where the Princess, then in the zenith of her marvellous beauty, had reigned a queen. Her feeling towards Lady Frances, therefore, was the half-affectionate, half-provoked feeling of an aunt or near family connection toward an awkward, well-intentioned schoolgirl,—a good girl, a fine creature at bottom, but too hopelessly *gauche* and undeveloped for anything, and without a soul to look after her or take any heed of her manners or deportment. And to Lady Frances herself, accustomed as she had been throughout a tolerably long lifetime to have the charge of a whole world, all depending on or sustained upon her shoulders, there was something infinitely amusing, and at the same time refreshing, in finding herself thus suddenly relegated back to childishness—put by her mother's old friend upon the footing of a schoolgirl,—she whom every one else thought so old! It made her feel as if she really were young again,—ardent, eager, vehement, impressionable—full of those hopes,

dreams, confidences, aspirations, which had not been destined many of them, poor soul, to find any very tangible realisation.

The tide was low as Michael Angelo pushed the *sandolo* into the narrow canal, and fastened it at the foot of the steps leading to the garden. The hot sun brought out the strong acrid smell of the sea-weed, as it lay crinkling and drying up in the fervent blaze. Three or four small boys were bathing in the canal nearer to the *lagune*, their sleek black heads shining like those of seals under the glittering shadow of the archway. Myriads of small skip-jacks—"little pigs" Venetian children call them—fled before the advance of the *sandolo*, up into the cracks of the stone walls; and big, ugly crabs scuttled away, twiddling their antennæ vigorously with consternation. Leaving it and Michael Angelo under the glowing shadow of the walls, Lady Frances walked unannounced up the narrow path, and turning the corner of the house, came upon a little encampment, enclosed on three sides by an old red balustrade, from which point diverging lines of pergolas, muffled in verdure, led the eye insensibly away to the greys and the blues of the *lagune*. Here she found the Princess sitting in her usual place under a big striped awning, which made a deep pent-house of shade over her venerable head. Four grotesque figures, in bright-red terra-cotta, grinned and grimaced at her from the corners of the balustrade; two magnificent cypresses towered immediately behind, under the pyramidal shadow of one of which sat Madame Bauche, the companion,—a deaf and elderly Frenchwoman, with a fat, good-humoured smile, which gave her somewhat the air of a Capuchin friar. A parrot, perched upon a

branch overhead, gave an occasional harsh interrogative croak, as if to inquire whether anything was ever going to happen in the world again ; a brown, apoplectic-looking spaniel, with feet far apart and red tongue lolling, sat at the foot of its mistress's couch, looking like one of those grotesque animals, half dog half lion, which figure on monumental effigies. Sitting there, in the absolute dream-like silence, surrounded by her familiars, the old lady had all the air of some benevolent sorceress, who had ended at last by succumbing to her own incantations ! She opened her eyes, however, as Lady Frances's step sounded upon the gravel, and lifted her head a little to see who her unwonted visitor was.

"Ah ! whom have we here ? It is you, Fanchon, my child, is it ?" she said, holding out a tiny, wrinkled hand, and blinking affectionately at the new comer. "Come in her *sandolo*, has she ? Ah, fy, fy, a *sandolo* ! A nice sort of conveyance that for a demoiselle of quality ! Some day or other a little wind will get up, and you will go to the bottom, you and your *sandolo*, then you will remember that I have warned you ! And your brother, the beau Colonel, what is he doing, and why does he not look better after his sister ? He never comes to see me now, I observe. Probably he thinks that I am dead, but that, you should tell him, is no reason ; he ought to come and place a leaf of *immortelle* upon my tomb,—it would be only *convenable* ; your mother, were she alive, would insist upon his doing so."

"He means to come, I am quite sure, but he is so busy, it is very difficult for him to make time—it really is," his sister said, with eager apology. "Every day somebody carries him away ; even

I see very little of him. To-day he is gone with friends to the Lido."

"Ah, with friends—not with your little squeaking friend, that ugly one—what is her name—the one with the green eyes ? He is not with her *par exemple*, is he ?"

"With Madame Facchino ? Oh dear, no, she has not gone at all. What made you think of her, Princess ?"

"I don't know ; I have my own little ideas. I saw them once together here, when they thought I was asleep. Your little friend is not so simple as she seems. She has her plans. Mark my words, some of these days she will astonish you."

Lady Frances remained silent. She was astonished already. It was such a completely new idea, filled as her mind was at present with quite other apprehensions, that she felt unable for a minute to reply. She was about to ask the Princess whether she had any other and more tangible grounds for suspicion, but before she could do so, that autocratic little personage had already drifted away to another subject.

"Titi, my little blessing, thou must not scratch thyself there upon my dress," she said to the spaniel. "To scratch one's self publicly is not *convenable* for little dogs ! Go, go to thy good Bauche ; see what she has got for thee. Bauche, my angel, give Lady Fanchon a cup of coffee and some *brioche*—the one with the little red bonbons. You do not get your nasty tea here, bad child. Your mother used to try and make me drink tea. Never ! Forty years I tried, but I never could accomplish it. To me it is physic, simply physic ! Will you have some strawberries too ? there are some in that little basket. I dare not touch them myself ;

but you are young, you do not fear for your digestion. Just look at all those rows of them there in that border—it is a sin, is it not, that no one comes to eat them? Ah, and Fanchon, you that are so strong and active, will you go and pick me some of that daphne? See the great bush! All this afternoon I have been sighing for it, but Bauche is so fat I have not the heart to ask her. The scissors? There they are on the wall, close to that little red man's feet."

Lady Frances found the scissors and cut the daphne, and brought a great bunch of it to her old friend, who buried her face in it till the white satin cap ribbons were dusted with yellow pollen. Then the visitor got a low chair, and sat down close to the other's couch, not talking much, but resting, enjoying herself, dreaming. It was unspeakably restful, unspeakably green, and silent, and delightful. No one else came, and she sat on and on, listening to the occasional chimes of the Redentore, whose great grey-slated cupola showed over the tops of the acacia-trees; catching an occasional gleam of some white sail upon the broad face of the *lagune*, where the pink campanile of the Armenian convent alone, of all the world of houses and churches without, was visible through a break in the trees. Her shyness, her self-consciousness—those two lifelong banes of her poor existence—were quietly lulled away here and laid to sleep. It would have been as impossible indeed to be shy or self-conscious in a tomb as in that peaceful retreat, where everything spoke of growth, of the freshness of spring, of slow, kindly, gentle, inexorable decay. It seemed to her as if time itself had somehow fallen asleep; as if she had reached a land which we

all of us occasionally dream of, where everything flows by to a tune of running water; where struggles, troubles, inequalities, disagreeables of all sorts are put away, not for a while, for a minute or two, but for ever, and ever, and ever. Fat Madame Bauche, with her false front and her monastic smile; the asthmatic Titi; the undemonstrative parrot; the ugly little terra-cotta statuettes which grinned from the four corners of the balustrade; the old lady herself, with her shaking hands and delicate reticulations of wrinkles,—they were not, any of them, ideal tenants of a paradise perhaps, and yet, like some Gothic building in which the very grotesqueness is an element of the beauty, they all seemed to harmonise—to form part of the beauty of the spot, of that peace which encompassed it as with a green curtain, shutting out everything that seems discordant—which seemed to belong to its very stones.

"So you have got steamers now!" the Princess said, suddenly opening her eyes after a long interval of silence, during which she seemed to have lapsed into a profound doze.

"Steamers?" Lady Frances repeated with some bewilderment.

"Yes, steamers. In Venice there—going up and down the Grand Canal,—steamers in Venice! That I should live to hear of it! I shall not live to *see it*, Dieu soi louer! for I am not going back to Venice,—not till they carry me there in a box. It cannot be so very long now. I have no pains, it is true; my inside, which troubled me so long, is at peace; but that, they say, is a very bad sign. The doctor comes now to see me once a-week; he wonders how I live on. He looks round the garden every time he lands to see if there are any signs

of death about. He inquires of the gondoliers, 'Her Excellency the Princess, is she—is she——?' and then he stops trembling, thinking of his fees, of which there will soon be no more for him. 'Her Excellency the Princess receives to-day!' my good Sebastiano answers solemnly, and then he advances, and tells me all the news. But Venice, Venice is a thing of the past, like me—like all whom I have known; this garden is for me all the Venice left. When I am gone they will want to tear it up and make it into—what do you call those things?—gas places. They will like to have their coals and cinders, their dirt and nasty smells here, just here where we are now sitting!"

"There is nothing in Venice so dear as this garden!" Lady Frances answered, looking affectionately round her, and then back again to the face of her old friend. "I could stay here always; I am never so happy anywhere else! Never!" she exclaimed.

The Princess blinked her old eyes kindly. She liked this enthusiasm of the other's; it was so young, so naïve, she thought.

"Listen then, Fanchon," she said,—"I will tell you a little secret. I had meant it to be a surprise, but, after all, a surprise is a folly. When I am gone this garden,—the cherries, strawberries, daphne bushes—all will be yours; it shall not go to the gas places." Her visitor started, and opened her mouth to disclaim, but the Princess gave her no time. "Yes, my child, do not say no: you will disturb me; you will make me sick; I shall have one of my attacks of nerves. It must be so, I tell you; do not refuse, unless you wish to break my heart. I leave you all—Bauche, the canary birds, and Titi. Yes,

Titi, my precious, my treasure; I am speaking of thee—thou hearest thy name, thou little dog, though Bauche is too deaf, and she does not know when she is spoken of. Fanchon, you must not say you will not. I tell you, you must, and you shall. I cannot make legacies, provisions—what do you call them? I have no near relations; they are all dead, dead, dead. If I had even, what would they do? They would write from Hungary, and they would say, 'Sell me all the old woman's things, and send me straight the money,' and Titi, and my little birds, and poor Bauche, who is so stupid, would be thrown out upon the streets. But thou wilt not do that. Thou wilt come and live here, and the beau Colonel too, if he chooses, and will let Titi and the rest stay in the garden till they die, and my poor Bauche go on with her knitting. And thou wilt think of the old woman who liked thee much, my Fanchon, though thou art but a *laideron*, poor one, and not like thy mother, who was a beautiful woman, with eyes like two stars, and shoulders like hills of snow. Ah, there are no such women now!"

Lady Frances was touched to the very quick: the tears sprang to her eyes, and the colour to her two thin cheeks. She stooped down and clasped the Princess's hand in both her own.

"Dearest, dearest Princess, do not leave me anything, please do not, and I will take care of them all the same!" she exclaimed entreatingly. "I have enough, more than enough of my own. I promise that they shall never want for anything while I am alive. Do let it be so, do trust me, you may indeed; and do not leave me anything. Why should you? I have

enough, more than enough, I assure you !”

“Nay, nay, Fanchon, it must be as I say. I am not going to be contradicted. I have never been yet, and I will not assuredly be by thee. If I did not know thou wert a good girl at bottom—mind me, I say at bottom, a very, very long way down—I would not do it.” Then, as Lady Frances again tried to interpose—“Would you have me scream? would you have me have a fit? would you have me die—here—now—at once?” she suddenly exclaimed, sitting bolt upright in her chair, and opening and shutting her eyes with the most alarming rapidity as she did so. “Loose my hand at once, bad child, lest I strike you to the very earth !”

Lady Frances for the life of her could not forbear from laughing, near as she had been to crying a minute or two earlier. The old lady in her sudden convulsion of passion, her two tiny withered hands upraised to strike, her small

wrinkled face red and creased with fury within its pleated cap borders, it was for all the world like a baby—a baby suddenly become old and wrinkled—transformed in the twinkling of an eyelid to over fourscore years, but remaining for all that a baby still, with all a baby’s feebleness, and all a baby’s absolute inability to hear or listen for a single instant to contradiction. What could she do but hastily agree to anything and everything that was required of her—anything that would allay this tempest so suddenly, so unaccountably sprung up?

No sooner had she done this than the Princess immediately calmed herself down again as if by magic—dismissed Madame Bauche, who had approached with an air of consternation from her knitting, and five minutes later was placidly discoursing about the behaviour of her petunias, which had certainly not flowered nearly so well as usual this season.

(To be continued.)

A BLACK YEAR FOR INVESTORS.

It has become of late an indispensable qualification for moving in polite society, to have a theory of the depression of trade. One can no longer dine out in comfort without having at his command an adequate supply of small talk about sugar bounties, reciprocity, and Mr Giffen's letters to the 'Times.' If he ventured forth insufficiently equipped, he might find lying in wait for him on one side a zealous missionary of the Fair Trade League, and on the other a cocksure apostle of the Cobden Club. Unfortunately we are not all gifted with the happy disposition of Mr Giffen, which enables him to refuse point-blank to see that trade is bad, or that manufacturers have anything to grumble about. In the experience of most of us, the commercial world is very much out of joint; and if we are to believe pessimists like Mr Ashmead-Bartlett, the man is not born yet who is to set it right. Mr Bright himself has given up disputing that the Board of Trade returns are bad. Between 40 and 50 millions sterling decrease in a single year is more than can be explained away in half-a-dozen of the most tersely worded jibes ever flung at the heads of unbelieving Tories. The more that the men of light and leading explain to us, the darker the mystery appears to grow. That profits are diminishing, that values are shrinking, and that the bitter struggle sardonically called "business" grows harder every day, we all know, but the why and the wherefore are as yet unsolved problems. The oracles who undertake to enlighten us on the causes of our misery are becoming one of the worst of its aggravations.

Each succeeding year leaves the country decidedly poorer than it found it; for not only has the productive income of the community further declined, but in one direction or another a serious cut has been made into its capital. It is not in the Board of Trade returns that we shall be able to trace this most grave though least obvious evidence of evil times. In the records of a very different institution—the London Stock Exchange—is the darkest lesson to be read of how the country is suffering. Merchants and manufacturers complain loudly of what in many cases is merely diminished incomes, but a bad year among investors may mean no income at all, and more or less complete sacrifice of capital. 1884 was such a year. Following on a series of sharp catastrophes in the leading investment markets, it found investors poor, and it left many of them in despair. The turn of the tide they had patiently waited for did not come—it did not even seem to be any nearer. The slow decline which killed them by inches was not stayed. Gleams of false hope visited them from time to time, but as a rule the shrinkage of prices went steadily on from January to December. It became so general that it ceased to discriminate, and attacked good stocks as well as bad. Consols suffered in common with North British Rails, and, excepting foreign bonds, no principal market has escaped unshaken. If the London Official List of the 31st December 1884 were minutely compared with the List of the same day in 1883, every variation in price being calculated on the amount of stock in the hands of

the public, the aggregate declines would be found to reach the solid figure of 123 millions sterling. The appreciations would amount to rather more than 50 millions, leaving a net decline of over 70 millions sterling for the year.

And yet the London Stock Exchange has had much less cause to complain than some of its provincial competitors. It has been positively fortunate in comparison with Scotland, where financial plunging seems to have become a fine art. Early in the year there was a succession of "liquidations" in the Scottish American market, all as bad as Wabash, though on a smaller scale. Fully one million sterling of capital was clean wiped out, and there was a shrinkage besides on other securities during the year to the extent of over 4 millions sterling. To set against this there were gains of little more than one million, the net depreciation on Scottish stocks having thus been $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions. Moreover, the Scottish investor bore also his full share of the losses on the London market, where a large amount of his speculative business is still transacted. On a moderate estimate, he lost as much in London as he did at home, or say another 4 millions sterling. English provincial stocks have held their ground more firmly perhaps than those of the larger markets, but though there has been no marked fall among them, they all show more or less evidence of depression. It is not too much to assume that the aggregate losses of Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Newcastle, Sheffield, and Birmingham, equalled those of Scotland, or, say, 4 millions sterling. Assign 2 millions to Ireland, which has considerable stock markets at Dublin and Belfast, and then the catalogue of investors' losses will be: London, 70 millions; English pro-

vincial stocks, 4 millions; Scottish stocks, 4 millions; Irish, 2 millions—total, 80 millions. But it should be explained that the heaviest depreciation on the London Exchange occurred in American Dollar Bonds and shares, which are not wholly held in this market. At the present moment the bulk of them may be in the States, as during the past two years every fresh panic caused great masses of them to be sent home to the Americans, who will watch their opportunity to reintroduce them at much more reputable-looking prices—in other words, considerably higher prices. If only half the loss in the American market were taken on our own shoulders, there would be about 25 millions to write off from the estimated losses of 1883. On this basis the net depreciation of London stocks might be reduced to about 50 millions sterling for the year, and the aggregate for all the stock markets in the United Kingdom would be nearly 60 millions sterling.

The British funds have led the way in this downward progress. Consols opened the year at 100 $\frac{1}{2}$, and closed at 99, while NewThrees receded from 101 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 99 $\frac{1}{2}$. These reductions represented on the total amount outstanding a loss of 12 millions sterling, the entire responsibility of which must be laid at the door of Mr. Childers and his abortive scheme for "sweating" the incomes of widow ladies and charitable trusts to the modest extent of 15 per cent. India stocks were depressed, partly, it may be, through Indian banks unloading, partly out of sympathy with Consols. They depreciated fully 2 millions sterling on the year, making 14 millions of a loss to the holders of British funds. The markets next in rank derived great benefit from the fright which

Mr Childers gave to the Three per Cent investors. There was a rush made out of Consols into Corporation stocks, Colonial Government Bonds, and the best class of railway debentures, preference shares, &c. The latter especially show a marked rise on the prices of 1883. Nearly every railway debenture quoted in London gained in value, the aggregate appreciation having been over $6\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling. The stocks of guaranteed lines gained in value nearly $3\frac{1}{4}$ millions, leased lines about half a million, and preference stocks close on $2\frac{1}{4}$ millions. On railway preference and debenture stocks generally, the rise for the year was over 13 millions, but unfortunately there is another side to the picture. Railway ordinary stocks lost fully more than the preferences and debentures gained. They were worth less by $14\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling at the end of the year than they had been at the end of 1883. Taking the home railway market all over, it lost from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 millions sterling in 1884. That was a trifle, however, to the shrinkage of the colonial lines, which mean practically Grand Trunks and Canadian Pacifics, with a few particularly sweet things like Montreal and Sorel thrown in. Canadian Pacifics dropped from $56\frac{1}{2}$ to 46, a depreciation of more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ million sterling on the stock listed. Grand Trunks performed one of their long drops in the early part of the year, and, roughly speaking, twice the quantity of them could have been bought with the same money at the end of December as at the beginning of January. Their aggregate shrinkage exceeded 5 millions sterling, raising the total loss in the Colonial railway market to not far from 7 millions.

Canadians are a stepping-stone to Americans. A long course of

Grand Trunks prepared us for the *ne plus ultra* of gambling stocks—Erie and Wabash. When we approach the American market, our arithmetical ideas have to be enlarged to suit the climate. Thousands, and even hundreds of thousands, sound small in the vernacular of the Vanderbilts and Jay Gould. Sometimes millions are a hardly adequate gauge of the high stakes that the American railway kings play for among themselves, or with the public when the public is in a mood for being fleeced. There have been many pyrotechnical displays in the American market, but the experiences of 1884 eclipsed them all. It was a year of historic scandals, defaults, liquidations, receiverships, railway wars, and general embezzlement. Big operators making their own game and throwing their loaded dice with unblushing frankness, had fleeced the last of the lambs, and now fell to fleecing each other. But in this instance the proverb has not held true, that when rogues fall out honest men get their own. The rogues have fallen out, but the honest men have got little of their money back yet. One rotten railway after another has burst up: first, dividends were stopped, then fixed charges ceased to be earned, and now apparently only a few steps more have to be taken to land even the old Trunk lines in bankruptcy. Twelve months ago it would have sounded as incredible that Lake Shore would "pass" a dividend, as that New York Central may have to do it before the current year is out. Bad as the outlook was at the beginning of 1884, he would have been silenced as a croaker who predicted that Louisville and Nashvilles would sink into the twenties, Pennsylvania and Ohios into the thirties, St Pauls into the sixties,

and New York Centrals into the eighties. Denvers at 8, Wabash Ordinary at 5½, Readings at 9, Eries at 14, Oregon and California at 16, and Ohio and Mississippi at 18, are more difficult for a "bull" of 1881 to realise than sugar at a penny per pound. They seem to be opposed to the course of nature, and after this we no longer wonder what may come next. Americans were supposed to be in the dirt at the end of 1883, when they were found to have shrunk 150 millions sterling in two years, but last year they contrived to drop another 50 millions sterling or more. The Dollar Bonds and shares quoted in London declined, in 1884, 47½ millions sterling, and the Sterling Bonds over 2 millions. A valuation of the same stocks taken in May last would have put them at least 40 millions sterling lower.

Foreign railways would have been a very dull, respectable market but for Mexicans, which played the part of meteor. As a melodramatic gamble they rivalled Wabash, and apparently they have more vitality. A stock which can dance gaily up from 20 to 140, and tumble back to 26 in less than two years, must command the admiration of every patriotic broker and jobber. It shows what human nature is capable of in moments of enthusiasm. Mexicans had a sharp recovery at the end of the year, which brought them out with the comparatively small depreciation of 1½ million, but the difference between the maximum and the minimum prices of the year would be over 3 millions sterling. Other foreign railways, especially the Brazilian and Argentine guaranteed lines, improved materially, and the net depreciation on this market was thereby reduced to less than one million sterling. In

the miscellaneous markets there were some severe depreciations, set off, however, by a few material gains. Of nearly seventy banks quoted in London, only five showed an improvement on the year, and it aggregated only £167,000; while forty were lower, to the extent of 6½ millions sterling. Here we are not taking into account the Oriental Bank, whose 1½ million of capital has to be written off entirely, with as much more that is being called up by the liquidator. Including it, the year's loss to holders of bank shares would be about 9½ millions sterling for the year; or, allowing for Oriental Banks having been worth only £12 at the beginning of the year, we may set the depreciation down at over 8½ millions. Commercial and industrial shares to the number of 119 appear on the London list, and of these nearly one half show declines aggregating almost 1½ million. Ten were higher on the year by £415,000, and the net depreciation in this market was about 1½ million. Coal, Iron, and Steel shares, thirty-one in number, had a similar experience. There were eighteen of them lower on the year by £1,425,000, and only one higher by £60,000. The net amount of shrinkage here was £1,365,000.

Shipping shares had a notoriously bad year. Of twenty-seven on the list in 1884, there were thirteen lower by £825,000, and only five higher by £109,000, leaving the net depreciation £716,000. The Insurance Companies show, as usual, very varied results, but the movement among them was limited. Of sixty securities in this class, only thirteen showed an appreciable change, having fallen to the extent of fully 1½ million sterling. Other seven companies rose in value, but only one of them, the North

British and Mercantile, to a noticeable extent. The total reductions were £232,000, and the net gains rather over 1½ million. Telegraphs and Telephones, which now represent over 30 millions sterling of paid-up capital and forty-nine distinct securities, gained last year on twenty-two of these £8000, and lost on nineteen of them nearly 2 millions sterling. Mines were an exemplary market. Speculation having betaken itself apparently to other quarters, South Caradons, 'Devon, Great Consols, and Wheal Bassetts are hardly ever heard of now in Capel Court. In the new official list, which was revised at the beginning of 1884, many of the smaller mining gambles were weeded out. Now only eleven British mines remain, and last year they depreciated to the extent of nearly a quarter of a million sterling. The colonial and foreign mines were also pruned, most of the moribund Indian gold ventures having been dropped out as games no longer worth the candle. The twenty-three companies thus shelved represented an aggregate capital of 3½ millions sterling, and the depreciation on the fifty-four companies left in amounted to another 5 millions. Rio Tinto alone accounts for over 2 millions of this decline, **Mason & Barry** for nearly one million, and **Tharsis** for about three-quarters of a million. The shares of the Spanish copper mines thus lost in market value not far from 4 millions sterling in a single year. The last of the retrograde securities are waterworks stocks, which have had the heavy shadow of Sir William Harcourt pressing on them. Ten of the leading stocks were lower on the year by nearly £700,000, and five were higher by £140,000, making the net loss

considerably over half a million.

Thus in seventeen of the twenty-four principal divisions of London stocks, we have found losses on balance ranging from a quarter million to 50 millions sterling, and amounting altogether to about 108 millions. The departments which showed a balance of gain are much easier described. At the head of them are Foreign Stocks, which had an exceptionally firm year. Three or four of the leading classes had a substantial advance. Russians, for instance, were between 9 and 10 millions sterling better on the year; Spanish were fully 6 millions ahead of 1883; Italians 1½ million up; Egyptians fully half a million; and even Turks come out with flying colours on the right side. Out of a hundred and thirteen stocks, fifty-five appear to have been gainers, and only twenty-five losers—the balance of appreciation being over 16 millions sterling. It is a rather ominous sign of the times that the only securities which maintain their value among us are foreign stocks, and, of all stocks in the world—Russians, Spanish, and Turks! The only home securities in this category are Corporation stocks, Gas shares, which were better all round, Canals and Docks, and Tramways. In the Gas department, thirty-seven out of fifty-nine stocks improved, and only two were lower, the balance of gain having been fully 2½ millions sterling. What a moral for the Electric Light Companies, whose own shares have shrivelled up into decimal fractions! Of thirty-five Canal and Dock Companies, ten rose during the year by nearly 2 millions, and seven were reduced by about £425,000, making a net gain of 1½ million sterling. Only seven of the twenty-four leading markets

show a balance of gain for the year, and these gains amount to barely 22 millions sterling altogether. Fully three-fourths of this total was realised, as above hinted, on Russians, Spanish, Turks, and Egyptians! Only four home markets come out on the right side, their net gains aggregating $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling. The seventeen principal markets showing balances of loss are domestic and American. The aggregate of their net depreciations is 93 millions, making the final outcome of loss on London stocks, as already stated, fully 70 millions sterling.

Even to people who have no favour for "stock gambling," as they call it, these must be rather impressive facts. Every succeeding year exhibits an increase in the proportion of the national wealth that has passed out of personal control into the control of joint-stock companies. Joint-stock administration is the horse-leech that is continually crying "Give! give!" Or, to use a more pleasant simile, it is the Aaron's rod that swallows up every other form of enterprise. If an intelligent man of business, who had not given much attention to the subject, were stopped in the street and made to say offhand what proportion of the wealth of the United Kingdom he thought was under joint-stock administration at home or abroad, he might guess at a fourth. That would seem to most people a liberal estimate, but it is far below the mark. The total wealth of the United Kingdom is computed by statisticians at between 8000 and 9000 millions sterling, less 900 millions of national and municipal debt. The most precise estimate is that of Mulhall—namely, 8720 millions, and the details of his calculation

stand scrutiny fairly well. Very nearly half the amount of that wealth is represented by securities officially dealt in on the London Stock Exchange; and if we add to them the securities not officially quoted there, we shall have at least another fourth of the national assets. Mr. Burdett, in his "Official Intelligence" for 1882, gives details of no less than 1623 securities officially quoted, representing an aggregate nominal capital of 4107 millions sterling, and a paid-up capital of 3634 millions sterling. These did not include foreign stocks, with coupons payable abroad, representing an aggregate value of 2160 millions sterling. It has been found almost impossible to form even a rough estimate of the amount of such foreign stocks held in this country. That large holdings of them do exist here is, however, indisputable. Foreign bankers and brokers deal freely in them, and through them they have got to a considerable extent into the hands of British investors. If British holdings were only one-tenth of the whole, that would represent over 210 millions sterling. Including, therefore, foreign stocks with coupons payable abroad, the securities officially dealt in on the London Stock Exchange in 1882 had a nominal money value estimated at 3850 millions sterling. At the commencement of 1884 the official list was revised, and many moribund securities dropped out. It now contains about 1700 quotations, and the aggregate value of the capital they represent is 3437 millions, or, adding a tenth of the foreign stocks with coupons payable abroad, 3647 millions sterling. An interesting analysis of them is appended to the present article.¹

¹ See table on p. 284.

But this 3647 millions sterling of joint-stock capital is far from being a complete total. In London there are swarms of small companies, private and semi-private, which have no quotation. For every mining company on the official list there are possibly three that would not be admitted on it because of being either too small or doubtfully constituted, or little dealt in. Many large trading establishments are also, in fact, joint-stock companies, though their shares may be confined to a very small circle of the actual managers and their friends. The capital controlled by these unquoted companies is vastly larger than would be supposed, but we may take it at only 200 millions sterling. Of late years "Syndicates" have become an important agency in the more speculative region of finance. Some of them develop into regular companies, while others keep their good things to themselves. In one way or another, they influence a considerable amount of capital, which will not be over-estimated at 50 millions sterling. So far we have been speaking of London only; but outside of London there is a wide field of joint-stock enterprise, which is year by year extending. It requires only a glance at the commercial intelligence of our leading provincial newspapers to discover that the great industries of the country are passing rapidly out of private hands into the maelstrom of joint-stock management. Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle, Glasgow, Dundee, and even Aberdeen, are centres of limited liability enterprise. One by one the merchant princes of a generation ago are either retiring from the field, or are converting themselves into companies. Of the old race of historic firms, which added fac-

tory to factory, and piled up million on million, as the profits of all the markets in the world flowed into their coffers, hardly a single specimen now remains. When Henry George and his Socialist friends start the hunt for bloated capitalists, it is not in commerce that they will find their prey, any more than among the landowners. The bloated capitalist has been wise in his generation: having got the cream off the Anti-Corn Law milk, he has left the skim for company promoters to fight over. Satisfied, as he well ought to be, with his prizes, he has gracefully retired from the lottery-box to give his fellow-citizens a chance at the blanks which he leaves behind him. For a dozen or fifteen years back they have been drawing blanks, with most exemplary patience and assiduity, in all the great industries which they were accustomed to consider the foundations of national wealth. They have pertinaciously sunk money, which they will never see again, in coal-mines, in ironworks, in cotton factories, in ship-building, in warehouses, in hotels, and in every other kind of business that used to yield fortunes, but now barely pays directors' fees.

On the London Stock Exchange there are companies to the number of 276, classified as Commercial and Industrial, Iron, Coal, and Steel, Investment and Financial, and Shipping, which represent an aggregate capital of between 80 and 90 millions sterling. Thirty years ago nine-tenths of these would have been private establishments, and their profits or losses would have affected a mere handful of people compared with the thousands of families whose comfort, if not their actual subsistence, depends on them now. But it is in the provinces that the industrial and commercial joint-stock

company flourishes. Provincial Stock Exchanges have been created by it, and some of them have long lists of local stocks which are dealt in at all hours of the day. No attempt has ever been made to appraise these local stocks, but it may be taken as a safe conclusion that their aggregate far exceeds the corresponding class of stocks quot-

ed in London. The latter amount, roughly speaking, to 50 millions sterling. Provincial companies of all kinds will be estimated within the mark at 200 millions, and the probability is that we are a good deal under the real total. The various classes of securities indicated may now be summarised thus:—

	Paid-up Capital.
1700 stocks officially quoted in London,	£ 3,437,000,000
Foreign stocks held, say,	216,000,000
Syndicates and unquoted companies in London,	250,000,000
Provincial companies,	200,000,000
	£ 4,103,000,000

Out of 8720 millions sterling of national capital in the United Kingdom (less the 900 millions of public debt), very nearly one-half exists in the form of securities, which are daily passing from hand to hand, and are subject to all the fluctuations of a sensitive market. This fact is one of the neglected keys to the problem of depressed trade, over which economists and politicians are now exercising their troubled brains. Depressed trade, as Mr Bright takes every opportunity of impressing on us, comes in spasms, and it should, he thinks, be sufficient consolation for us in our present experience of it that we are no worse off than our neighbours. But it is odd that so shrewd and practical a man should be such an emphatic teacher of fatalism in a matter of this sort. Bad trade may, as he says, come in spasms; but it must always have a cause, or a combination of causes, and these causes are never the same on two occasions. The present depression is as different in all its essential features from the collapse of 1873, as that differed from the financial crisis of 1866, and the crisis of 1866 differed from the crash of 1857. In 1857 it was overtrading that

strained the delicate fabric of commercial credit, and brought ruin on the offenders. That was a sharp crisis and a severe one while it lasted; but it spent itself within a comparatively narrow circle, and was followed by a speedy recovery. In 1866 it was speculative finance that brought its votaries to grief. The Joint-Stock Companies Act of 1862 had given great facilities for the application of limited liability to financial enterprise. It created the company promoter, the guinea-pig director, and all that costly brood of vampires who have since fed on the innocent investor. In 1863 there were nearly seven hundred companies registered under it. In 1864 the number rose to nearly nine hundred. In 1865 it turned the nine hundred; and in 1866 it was advancing merrily towards the thousand a year, when Black Friday came and blighted its untimely blossoms. This time the collapse was more severe than in 1857, and its effects wider spread, but the recovery was again very rapid. Two years later Mr Gladstone was able to boast that the prosperity of the country was advancing by leaps and bounds. It bounded into the crash of

1873—this time a Stock Exchange crisis. The money that had been coined abroad by our merchants and manufacturers was, as a matter of gratitude, invested in foreign securities, which were specially created to suit the British market. We kept open house in Capel Court for foreign Governments willing to borrow, for contractors who had railways to build, for speculators who had mines to sell, and for sharpers of every clime and complexion who took the trouble to learn the incantation by which money could be spirited out of our pockets. Swindling was never easier or pleasanter, or more respectable, than in those halcyon days. The borrower had only to promise high enough interest, and money poured in on him. If he had offered 5 per cent on a security as good as Consols, he would have piped in vain in the market-place. When he offered 7 per cent on an unmade railway in South America, he was overwhelmed with subscriptions. When he mentioned 10 per cent in the name of the Government of Honduras, he was wellnigh torn to pieces by eager lenders. As for American railways, they were the veritable lamp of Aladdin. They had only to shed their fertilising light on the boundless prairie, and it would blossom as the rose in dividends. So the great game went on—millions to the East for the Turk and the Khedive, millions to the West for Jay Gould and the Mexicans.

In 1873 the value of the foreign stocks registered on the London Stock Exchange, with interest payable in London, had risen to 444 millions sterling. Ten years before, it had been under 155 millions. The nominal value of the foreign railway securities quoted was 170 millions, against 164 mil-

lions in 1865. In the latter year there was not an American railway stock and bond officially known in London, but in 1873 they had got into the official list to the extent of nearly 83 millions. Even that was only the beginning of the flood, for there are now over 320 millions sterling of them honoured with a quotation. Fully 50 millions consist of Sterling Bonds, which, presumably, are altogether held here. The remaining 270 millions is made up of the miscellaneous rubbish of Dollar Bonds and shares, which sell at any price, from five cents on the dollar upwards. When the crash of 1873 came, there were about 500 millions sterling of British money sunk in foreign speculations, more or less wild and apocalyptic. The 7 and 10 per cent lenders who had provided most of it were flayed alive when their coupons began to be returned unpaid, and their stocks ran down from par into the depths of unsaleability. But, after all, they were only a limited class of fools, and the country did not stand still to mourn over them. It felt the shock badly at first, but pulled itself together, and went on again pretty steadily till the fall of the City of Glasgow Bank brought to light an abyss of rottenness which all the while had yawned underneath.

The depression we now suffer from is the slowly gathering result of causes which have been in operation for at least ten years. It began in 1873 with the enormous loss of accumulated capital then sustained in our foreign investments. It has been aggravated year after year by fresh losses on investments, both home and foreign, and by destructive competition in trade. While, on the one hand, it becomes more difficult every day to make money, on the

other it becomes more difficult to keep it when made. The candle of national wealth is being burnt at both ends, and the effects are felt by every class of the community. Particular industries or classes may, as Mr Bright contends, have been as bad before, but no one will say there has ever been within historical memory a depression at once so severe and so widespread as the present. Not a single section of the community is exempt from it; and though happily the working class has been so far less affected in proportion than any other, it may be only a matter of a few months when depression shall pass into far-reaching destitution. The hard gripe of genteel poverty is already keenly felt in homes which still offer a fair and smiling face to the world; and where a few years ago the serenity of opulence reigned, anxiety and care are now eating into the daily life.

We have two distinct factors to take note of in the existing depression—destruction of capital on the one hand, and suicidal competition on the other. This is the first occasion on which their combined influence has been strongly felt. In the crisis of 1857 there was a temporary loss of trading profits, but comparatively little destruction of existing wealth. In 1866 there was destruction of wealth through bad speculation, but almost no loss of trading profits. Trade then was in the heyday of its prosperity. In 1873 the aggregate loss of capital through bad investments must have been enormous, but trade was still profitable, and wealth continued to accumulate. The losses of that crisis would have been wiped out in a few years had the earning powers of the community continued unimpaired. But the pressure of foreign competition which

is now sapping the vitals of our commerce had already begun. It has gone on intensifying from year to year, and the recuperative power of the country weakens in proportion. Losses which might have done little harm ten years ago are serious now, for they cannot be so readily retrieved. In attempting to redeem them, we are only more likely to get plunged into deeper trouble. Every investor or speculator who is fighting against the current knows that fact only too well in his private experience; and in the aggregate it must be no less true of the community.

It is a double problem that has to be grappled with on behalf of the nation—how to earn money, and how to avoid losing it when earned. Though in theory these may be quite distinct questions, they have come to be very much mixed up in practice. Every joint-stock investor is nowadays more or less of a trader, and most traders, if not investors themselves, are affected by the fluctuations of the investment markets. A default on the bonds of some little known railway in the Far West may have an easily traceable effect on the whole circle of our commerce. It cuts off so much of the income of every British holder of the bonds, and if they are forced to sell, it cuts still more cruelly into their capital. They have to retrench, which means that they have less to spend among their tradesmen. The tradesmen in turn have to retrench, and have less to spend with the wholesale dealers. The wholesale dealers can take less from the manufacturers; and if the process were carried to a serious length, the manufacturers would have less to spend in wages among their workpeople.

Suppose, next, that the whole-

sale dealer and the manufacturer are joint-stock companies. Their shares may be held by hundreds of persons who know nothing about the business they carry on, and have no interest in it beyond the dividends they expect to draw from it. To them depression of trade takes the very tangible form of reduced dividends, and the process of retrenchment already described begins all over again. The investor spends less with the tradesman, the tradesman less with the wholesale dealer, and the wholesale dealer less with the manufacturer, ending, perhaps, in a further reduction of dividends, and further contraction of income among investors. If the full significance of this circle of self-multiplying losses could be expressed in figures, it might reach a startling magnitude. Of the 4100 millions sterling of securities above enumerated, not one-half can be considered beyond the range of speculative fluctuation. If we reckon as absolutely safe, both in respect of capital and interest, such items as the British Funds, 811 millions; Corporation Stocks, 43 millions; Colonial and Provincial Government Bonds, 130 millions; first-class Foreign Government Stocks, say 400 millions; Railway Debenture and Preference Stocks, about 420 millions; first-class American and Foreign Railway Bonds, say 50 millions; and commercial securities of the gilt-edged sort, say 100 millions,—we shall have a total of little more than 2000 millions sterling of investments free from risk. Among the 2100 millions of stocks and shares lying outside this select circle speculation reigns. It may vary in degree from the smallest minimum of risk to the wildest gamble, but one character pervades the whole.

The investor who ventures into it embarks on a sea of hazards which is swept by storms from all quarters of the globe. For a month or two, or even for a short year, he may bask in the sunshine of a rising market, but his normal condition is to find the waves dashing over him, or, what is worse, to feel the water ebbing away from under him as his frail bark runs aground. Short and fitful “booms,” followed by prolonged agonies of shrinkage, is the natural course of events he must get accustomed to.

There are practised gamblers in stocks who enjoy the excitement of quickly changing values. They have schooled themselves to win without being elated, and to lose without being depressed. They claim no sympathy when the market goes against them, for they are supple, and can follow it either up or down as the temper of the times may dictate. They are not investors, and, as a rule, expect no income from the stuff they gamble in. It suits their purpose better, in fact, if it has dropped altogether out of the ranks of interest-bearing securities, as the less intrinsic value it has of its own, the better suited it is for a gambling counter. Of the 2100 millions of speculative securities held in this country, perhaps 500 millions are of the gambling sort, such as Erie shares, Grand Trunks, Indian Gold Mines, and Electric Lighting shares. It is only in a figurative sense that these can be reckoned as wealth at all. They are rather the spectres of wealth that has been squandered. Dividends are unknown in their history, and are not expected from them in the most distant future; but Capel Court is always loth to part with a “nimble ninepence,” however seedy. The rubish goes up and it goes down;

one fool loses on it and another gains, but as a national asset it is hardly worth counting. The serious losses of investors are not made there, but in the wide borderland between investment and speculation,—among the newly-launched mines, which promise fortunes to shareholders; the industrial companies, which are too often the shells of a splendid business with the kernel taken out; and the foreign railways, which, when made, turn out to be far in advance of their time. The shareholder who above all others deserves pity, is he who goes into the market intending to invest, and after he has done it discovers that he has been unintentionally speculating. To such a person the commercial laws of the country and its financial practices are most skilfully planned snares. The one leads him on the ice, and the other does nothing whatever to help him when he has suffered the inevitable fall.

It is the reckless investor and not the reckless gambler who inflicts the severest loss on the country. Reverting to our analysis of securities, if 2000 millions be set aside for those that are perfectly safe, and 500 millions for those that are virtually worthless, there would remain 1600 millions for the intermediate kind. Taking one year with another, these yield a very poor rate of interest overhead. Perhaps 3 per cent would be a sufficiently high estimate, considering that if many are pretty regular in their dividends others are intermittent, and a large proportion have ceased paying any at all. Three per cent on 1600 millions sterling is equal to 48 millions a-year. If that amount came in with the regularity of dividends on Consols, it would be a valuable element in the national income, but

it fluctuates wildly. The coal and iron companies offer a good example of how it can rush from one extreme to the other. The same security of that class has yielded 20 per cent in good years, and nothing at all in bad ones. Nor has the fluctuation in dividend been the worst evil with them. The market value of the security has risen or fallen with the dividend, and what should only have been temporary loss of income has meant to many shareholders actual ruin. A very dramatic comparison might be drawn between a good and a bad year in speculative investments, such as commercial undertakings, finance companies, second or third rate American railways, &c. In the good year they may quite easily yield an average return of 5 or even 6 per cent, equal say to 80 millions sterling. In the bad year they may drop to an average of 2 per cent or less, equal in money to only 32 millions sterling. In the 6 per cent year their market value might be considerably over par. Some of them would rise to 100 or 200 per cent premium, and the 1600 millions nominal, worth in an average year say 1000 millions, might in an inflated year be bought and sold on a basis of 1500 millions. In the 2 per cent year all this would be changed. Premiums would run off, and values fall to non-dividend level. The aggregate result might be a shrinkage from 1500 millions to 1000 millions again, or even less.

This is by no means an extreme calculation. In a comparatively short time we have seen Rio Tintos drop from over 30 to 12, Tharsis from £7½ to £5½, Cunard Steams from par to less than half, Mexican Rails from 140 to 26, Arizonas from pounds to shillings, and so on. These violent declines

imply fearful losses for unfortunate buyers during the boom. It may be said that sellers on the boom gained what the buyers have lost, and that in the end the country has suffered little. But this does not apply in the many cases where bad investments have sent a large amount of money out of the country to enrich the too 'cute American or the not over-scrupulous Canadian. Moreover, the ruin of individuals must always involve loss to the State, even when other individuals benefit by it. Society is not compensated for a dead man by two or three other persons being a little fuller-blooded in consequence. Violent fluctuations in securities are disastrous from a national point of view, even when the losses and gains both fall within the community. They are doubly disastrous when we have to bear all the loss ourselves, and clever foreigners get all the profit. To apply these principles to the present case, we have first to note a ruinous reduction of income from speculative investments, which may be estimated at 50 millions sterling per annum for the past three or four years, or 200 millions in all. Secondly, there is the consequent shrinkage in capital value of the securities affected by bad trade and reacting on it. This, at only 25 per cent of the market values of four years ago—say 1500 millions—would be 375 millions sterling. On principal and income together, there would be a loss in the four years of 575 millions sterling. The harvest from our investments is as fickle as our grain crops, and beyond comparison more important in its influence on trade. The latter in an average year are valued at above 70 millions sterling, while the national investments, if they yielded only 3 per cent all round, would represent an income

of 130 millions. The losses of investors during the past four years exceed what the country would suffer if it did not grow an ear of wheat or any other grain for the next ten years.

This investing industry, which is carried on in the most haphazard way, which is not even a recognized profession, and which no House of Commons ever thinks of protecting by suitable legislation, is, next to our foreign trade, the keystone of national progress. While our investments were profitable we grew rapidly rich. Since they have become unprofitable we are growing rapidly poor, or at least, our investing classes are. The causes of this disagreeable change are worthy surely of some study. Several of them lie on the surface, as, for instance, the credulity of investors, the absolute incompetence of many directors of joint-stock companies, the tendency of competent men to undertake too much, the merely nominal interest that many directors have in the companies they control, the dearth of reliable specialists in departments, such as mining and ranching, where they are indispensable; finally, the absence of legal safeguards against sharp practices of all kinds behind the backs of shareholders. A new Joint-Stock Company Act is badly wanted. The one we now work under is nearly twenty years old, and in various respects it is out of date. When joint-stock companies were mere experiments, the Legislature could not be too strict with them lest they should be discouraged; but now that they have spread their hands over fully one-half of the realised wealth and more than half the trade of the country, they require to be dealt with in a different spirit. It is high time to revert to the good old principle of

holding a man who takes charge of other people's money strictly responsible to them as their trustee. Seeing that he voluntarily undertakes the trust he should be held answerable, not for his honesty merely, but for competence and diligence. If he does not understand his business, he has no more right to become the paid servant of a company than to engage himself on false pretences to a private employer. Above all, he should have such a substantial interest in the concern that he cannot possibly benefit, as directors may easily do now, at the expense of his fellow-shareholders. Complimentary fees might have to be converted into regular salaries, as in the case of managing directors of railways, but the additional expense would be true economy.

A well-paid director could not object to being required to hold permanently a solid amount of stock; nor should he be allowed to sell his qualifying shares, or deal in them under any pretence. A simple provision of this kind in an amending Joint-Stock Companies Act would frighten every amateur manager and guinea-pig director out of the field. It might fix the director's holdings on a sliding scale according to the amount of capital. For the first £100,000 of paid-up capital it might be $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and from £100,000 to £500,000, 1 per cent for each director. On a board with a quarter million of capital to administer, the qualification would thus be £4000 for each director,—not an oppressive condition to attach to a suitably paid office. Beyond £5000 it would be hardly necessary to go, even in the case of larger companies. The chief point to secure would be the *bona fides* of these directorial holdings.

The share or stock certificates should be issued in the name of the director, and deposited by him in a public office for safe keeping, he, of course, drawing the dividends. Such qualifying shares or stock should not be saleable while the owner remains a director, but any additional stock or shares he might hold he should be free to deal with as he pleased. There are not many men who could go in on these terms for a score, or even a modest dozen, of directorships, as is quite an ordinary practice now. Two, or at most three, companies would be enough for the most ubiquitous of financiers, but they might, being better paid, yield as good an income as twice or three times the number do at present. The work, in proportion as it was better paid, and performed under a stricter sense of responsibility, would be improved, and rendered far more valuable to shareholders. There are already a few classes of joint-stock undertakings, banks, and home railways for instance, in which management has become a science. They have fixed rules and tests which effectually shut out the amateur; but our trading companies, our finance companies, and, worst of all, our mining companies, are run for the most part by persons who have their business to learn at the expense of their employers. A very small percentage of directors in those departments have either a sufficient stake in the enterprise, or sufficient brains to give to it, and hence the ghastly work they provide for the financial gravedigger.

But killing a company is not the worst that can be done to it by incompetent or unscrupulous management. It may be kept in a state of protracted suicide by

means of reckless and profitless competition. There is a growing outcry for fair trade as against the foreigner, but fair trade is also wanted in many important branches of industry at home. Private manufacturers and merchants begin to look askance, and with good reason, at the joint-stock companies that are crowding into their best markets. These do not compete on equal terms, as the private traders do among themselves. When markets are falling, and prices have to be reduced, the joint-stock companies keep on cutting long after private traders have been brought to the verge of bankruptcy. They have in every way more latitude. If they earn no profit, the directors have only to express their sympathy with the poor shareholders, and lay the blame on the bad times. If they incur heavy losses, they can call up more capital on pain of going into liquidation. In a shipping or a manufacturing company, repairs and plant may be neglected, or the requisite allowance for depreciation may be stinted, in order to swell dividends. Costly experiments—as, for instance, ocean-racing across the Atlantic—may be engaged in, which the enterprising experimenters would have been more chary of had they been staking only their own money. But when “the company pays” is taken for a motto, various games may be played which are not worth the candle.

It is cruel to investors that they should be the scapegoats of so much of the showy but unprofitable enterprise that is forcing its way into the chief industries of the country. It is cruel to these industries, and to the private capitalists engaged in them, that they should have to bear the brunt of a

competition which has practically no responsibility, and hardly any restriction. It is mischievous to the community that while men who trade with their own money have to act with the fear of bankruptcy before their eyes, men who trade with other people's money have virtually *carte blanche* to throw it away, and as much more as they can persuade their dupes to throw after it. Tens of thousands of pounds are being yearly pitched into the Atlantic by joint-stock shipping companies, which would have been saved, every penny of it, had the bulk of our commercial navy been still privately owned as it was ten or fifteen years ago. The private owners who survive foresee that they will have to give in one day. To compete with managers who are paid all the same whether they show a profit or a loss, is as hard a task as Earl Granville's playing at diplomacy with Prince Bismarck.

Joint-stock industrial companies have greatly complicated the existing depression, and disguised some of its worst features. They create a certain amount of employment for labour beyond real requirements, and in so doing they bolster up wages; but the wages are not actually earned. They come out of the pockets of shareholders, who have to go without dividends, or to make good great losses. When the comfort and contentment of the working classes are thrown in the teeth of those who complain of bad trade, it is ignored that to a considerable extent the working classes are living on unfortunate investors. If the trade and industry of the country had remained wholly in private hands, there would now be thousands more factories closed or running short

time. The victimised investor pays to keep them going, and the private trader loses no less heavily through having to compete with them. But because wages are thus artificially and unhealthily kept up, there is forsooth no real depression of trade!

ANALYSIS OF THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE LIST.

Amount issued.		No. of Stocks.	Un- changed	Higher.	Gains.	Lower.	Losses.
£					£		£
811,729,316	British Funds . . .	26	14	4	2,053,191	8	15,300,148
55,511,136	Corporation Stocks . .	36	23	11	252,340	3	119,944
173,533,046	Colonial Stocks . . .	94	51	18	725,050	25	636,843
694,852,846	{ Foreign Stocks (Cou- pons payable in London) }	113	33	55	20,077,594	25	3,583,943
254,038,864	Railways, Ordinary . .	66	22	10	835,279	34	15,425,874
14,968,098	Do. Leased Lines . .	27	19	8	467,627	..	126,633
161,585,444	Do. Debentures . . .	69	20	43	6,800,356	..	36,300
93,161,825	Do. Guaranteed . . .	47	10	36	3,497,233	6	1,320,663
174,713,936	Do. Preference . . .	84	22	52	3,910,087	1	1,224,497
77,709,928	Indian Railways . . .	35	16	13	1,169,497	10	6,600,757
57,835,325	Colonial Railways . .	51	17	4	40,836	6	47,506,720
272,573,090	American Bonds & Shares	105	42	3	234,187	30	2,388,437
53,919,764	Do. Sterling . . .	46	10	6	233,986	60	3,629,470
76,029,297	Foreign Railways . .	80	25	26	1,919,514	30	182,877
156,932,642	Do. Obligations . . .	59	23	22	1,158,139	29	8,719,619
57,681,032	Banks . . .	69	24	5	167,331	14	425,841
35,302,096	Canals and Docks . .	35	18	10	1,962,704	40	1,649,136
26,537,692	{ Commercial, Indus- trial, &c. }	119	68	10	415,685	7	42,698
12,569,306	{ Corporation Stocks, Colonial & Foreign Financial, land, and Investment }	66	7	59	200,797	41	2,473,699
31,517,651	Gas . . .	59	30	37	1,423,852	48	109,187
94,065,550	Insurance . . .	60	40	7	2,918,038	2	1,550,068
11,620,699	Coal, Iron, and Steel . .	31	12	1	232,245	13	1,425,220
12,933,978	Mines, British . . .	11	2	1	60,000	18	235,768
260,917	Do. Colonial & Foreign	54	12	10	12,000	8	5,277,068
19,944,393	Shipping . . .	27	9	5	250,694	32	834,730
10,718,652	Tea and Coffee . . .	12	3	4	108,935	13	150,316
1,423,989	Telegraphs & Telephones	49	8	22	41,707	5	1,969,110
31,177,866	Tramways & Omnibuses	45	5	33	8,319	7	151,602
8,088,800	Waterworks . . .	25	10	5	923,618	10	679,183
24,504,960					142,558		
3,437,441,338		1699	630	535	52,243,999	544	123,576,341

NATIONAL INSURANCE.

THE recent revelations regarding the insufficiency of our naval armaments have naturally caused the public to ask, with a degree of anxiety proportioned to the present complicated nature of our foreign relations, What, failing our navy, are the means of national defence that we have to fall back upon? The answer, even when it comes from the mouth of a departmental Minister, is not reassuring; when it is returned by independent military authority, it is gloomy in the extreme. If our navy in its present condition cannot count for much, our coast and inland defences must go for less, in fact for nothing, in the presence of a strong and determined enemy. From time to time the subject has been raised; a certain amount of alarm has been created; the usual reassurances given; some steps towards action promised, which generally get no further than the formulation of plans on paper; and then the matter drops, until, after an interval of years, the public mind is again aroused to the fact that the country is still just as defenceless as it was before. So it has been, and so, it is to be feared, it will be, until some fatal experience has emphatically taught us the consequences of our neglect, when the hour has gone by for remedying it. It is well, however, to take advantage of those rare moments when the country, brought face to face with the facts of its position, finds its national optimism somewhat rudely shaken, and condescends to look at its own situation from a broader platform than that afforded by party representations.

Party government, in spite of the many advantages it secures to

the country, is the cause of serious inconveniences and dangers. The special dangers to which it is wished now to direct attention are the unsatisfactory condition in which the defences of the empire are kept, and the incomplete and in many respects inefficient state in which our military forces are maintained. No Government, whether Liberal or Conservative, would probably be able to obtain sufficiently large annual grants from the House of Commons, for the years that would be necessary, to allow of the naval and military resources of this country being put on a proper footing. Even if any comprehensive scheme, to be spread over several years, but dependent on annual votes for funds, were to be sanctioned by the Government now in power, there would be no security that the scheme would not be dropped, either by its original promoters or by their successors in office, when either party could make a bid for votes by effecting retrenchments in public expenditure. Since the present Liberal Government has been in power, important fortifications in progress at a foreign station, which had been deliberately planned and approved of, were stopped for no other reason than to save money. Such an unfortunate state of affairs is probably inseparable from the ordinary course of party government in any Anglo-Saxon community. The Americans are very much the same as ourselves, and neglect even more than we do the proper consideration of defensive measures. They, however, can afford to be careless in these matters without incurring any serious risks, as they are far distant from any

strong military power, and are not, like ourselves, within a few hours' sail from countries which maintain, even in peace time, armies which, for magnitude and completeness of organisation, have met with no parallel since the time of the Romans. It used to be the custom to believe that, in the hour of danger, we should compensate for our weakness in numbers and incompleteness of preparation by our superior courage, by extraordinary effort and energy, and by the vastness of our resources. As to our superior courage, if it exists, it would be of but little assistance to us in those days of long-range weapons and gigantic armies. But, as a matter of fact, we show by our acts that we do not really believe in our possession of any extra share of this quality; and our fortunes in recent campaigns have dispelled any credit that our neighbours might have allowed us on that score. No country in the world has been the scene of more disgraceful and uncalled-for panics than have been exhibited in England. No people, as a nation, are more alive to and alarmed at danger, whether imaginary or real, than the English; and on occasion of panic, we at once lose all idea of self-respect and of national dignity. We certainly do our best when committed to a war to bring it to a successful issue, and are sparing neither of men nor money in the endeavours we make. But once the war is over, we soon forget that it has occurred. We generally sacrifice any advantages that were to be derived from it, and are ready to believe that probably it is the last one in which we shall be concerned: we profit but little from experience gained, and neglect to take those precautions which would insure our being better prepared on future occasions.

It will probably be within the memory of many, that immediately after the great Indian Mutiny, when the massacres and disasters which we suffered, and the severe exertions and great sacrifices we had to make, were still fresh in men's minds, the Government of that country passed a resolution to the effect that in each cantonment in India a place of refuge should be constructed, in which, in case of emergency, the women and children, the sick, the treasure, and all official records, could at once find shelter, and where a small detachment of troops would be sufficient for their protection, releasing thus the main portion of the garrison for active duties in the field. We must all acknowledge the wisdom of this resolution, and give credit to the Government for its resolve to profit from bitter experience, and be better prepared for future emergencies. It was not intended that extensive permanent fortifications should be constructed, the expense of which would naturally have seriously retarded their completion, but simple and unpretending works, which would furnish neither more nor less than was contemplated in the designation of "Place of Refuge." The *exact* date of this resolution, which we are unable to quote, is immaterial; it was probably in 1859 or 1860, and certainly more than twenty years ago. Since that date numerous committees have assembled, and careful reports have been prepared, *but, as a matter of fact, nothing whatever has been done.* Not one single place of refuge has been constructed. On the contrary, one strong native fort, distant about two miles from a large cantonment in the north of India, and which was the means of saving many lives during the Mutiny, has been dismantled, and the bricks made use

of for the construction of civil buildings. It is believed that this work of destruction was carried out by the local government, without any reference to the military authorities ; and it is probable that other forts, which proved safe places of refuge when we were in difficulties, have met with a similar fate.

It must not be supposed that the distinguished officers who have held the important position of Commander-in-Chief in India since the Mutiny are responsible for the neglect with which the most ordinary military precautions are treated in that country. It is well known that they have made urgent representations to the Government on the subject, and more especially was this done by Lord Napier of Magdala and the present Commander-in-Chief.

Before the Mutiny, none believed in its possibility, nobody foresaw its occurrence. Who can say that we shall not find ourselves in similar peril some day again in India ? And if that time ever comes, we shall be but little better prepared to meet the crisis than we were on the last occasion. Some may say, Oh, but if the danger comes, we are sure to have sufficient warning, and it will be time enough then to take measures of safety. But when a feeling of uneasiness begins to prevail, and the military authorities urge the necessity of preparations, they will meet with the same objections on the part of the civil authorities as they have encountered on many previous occasions. They will be told that to take any steps, during a time when our relations with certain portions of the native populations are strained, would certainly increase any feeling of uneasiness existing, and would show at once that we no longer trusted them. It will

be the same story over again,—no preparation in time of peace, unwillingness to take precautionary measures when the danger is imminent, and probably massacres and heavy losses when it comes.

It must be remembered that places of refuge are required not only as a safeguard against purely internal disturbances, but they would be of the very greatest advantage in the event of a powerful enemy threatening us on our frontier. One of the first measures that would be attempted by the commander of an army undertaking the invasion of India would be to stir up the natives of the country against us, and to instigate attacks on our arsenals and depots, and along our lines of communication. What an assistance it would then be to the general commanding our army in the field, if he knew that all our posts in the rear were secure from attack, all our sick and families in safety, and that by occupying our places of refuge with comparatively small detachments, the great bulk of our troops were available for active operations.

In what a different manner the French manage their affairs in Algeria ! In that country every military station is fortified, and is quite impregnable to any attacks the Arabs might undertake against it. Towards the close of the Franco-German war, when the French troops had been to a large extent withdrawn from Algeria to assist in the defence of the mother country, the Arabs, thinking the opportunity too good to be lost, rose in many parts of the colony, and made very determined assaults on several of the French cantonments. But, thanks to their fortifications, the reduced French garrisons were in every case able to make a successful defence ; and beyond the burning of some scattered homesteads,

the inhabitants of which were able in many cases to take refuge in the fortified military stations, the Arabs were unable to inflict any injury on their rulers. The system of inert optimism, of which we have selected instances from our Indian administration, prevails in every other dependency where the influence of our Government and its military departments penetrates, and produces equally dangerous results. We cannot expect a Government to be prudent abroad that is improvident at home ; and until it has realised the necessity for preparing for future emergencies in Great Britain, there is not much chance of adequate consideration being extended to the circumstances of its external possessions.

Before entering on a discussion of the best manner in which our national insurance can be effected, it is necessary to show clearly that the measures at present taken for that purpose are insufficient. It is desirable, in the first place, to clearly and thoroughly comprehend that if this country is ever engaged in war with a strong naval and military power, no time will be available for preparation. It will be a word and a blow. When, in 1858, the question of war between France and England was in the balance, in consequence of the excitement caused in both countries by the Orsini conspiracy and the intolerably offensive addresses presented by certain colonels to the Emperor, the plan of action, which the French Government is believed to have contemplated, was to despatch, *at the same moment war was decided on*, strong squadrons from Brest and Cherbourg to bombard Portsmouth. In that case no time would have been available to complete our preparations. One of the chief objects with which the large military powers of the Con-

tinents are always studying and improving their system of mobilisation, is to insure the power of striking their enemy with as little delay as possible. We read of schemes elaborated by the Germans for despatching, within some hours of the declaration of war, such a force of cavalry into the enemy's territory as would prevent the mobilisation of their forces in those portions of the country near the frontier. Russia is said to have strong independent divisions of dragoons echeloned along her western border, ready to be launched into German or Austrian territory at a few hours' notice, in the event of war with either of those countries taking place. It is evident that similar cavalry operations cannot be undertaken against us, and that we cannot prepare for any rapid movement of this precise description against any Continental power. But we must remember that, in preparing for an attack on England, the first business of the enemy must be to mobilise his fleet. This mobilisation it should be our endeavour to prevent ; and for this purpose we should have plans of operation ready and a fleet to carry them out, and prepared to strike within a few hours of receiving its orders to do so. We ought to have a fleet available for this purpose, which should be maintained solely for this special duty, and which should never be beyond a few days' steaming from our coasts. A vigorous blow struck at once at the enemy's principal naval ports would not only incapacitate him from undertaking the invasion of England, but it should also so establish our naval prestige as, with the assistance of our fleets in distant waters, to insure very little disturbance being caused to our maritime commerce in any part of the world.

Our fleet is, and must remain, the first defence of England ; and it is by maintaining it in such superior strength and readiness as will enable it to strike at once and effectively, that the safety of the country can be best secured.

We cannot, however, trust our national existence and prosperity to one line of defence only. Behind the navy we must have regular troops *ready* to take the field—either abroad or at home—at very short notice, and our auxiliary forces in such a condition as to be available, after a few days' preparation, for active operations in the United Kingdom. Our naval and mercantile ports, both at home and in the colonies, should no longer remain a tempting prey to an enemy's cruisers, but should be protected by strongly armed forts.

The various measures which are necessary to put the United Kingdom and her possessions in a moderately safe and secure position will now be enumerated in the order of their importance, and will be subsequently discussed in detail. They are—

I. The strengthening of the navy.

II. The strengthening and efficient arming of the works defending our naval arsenals and ports, and a proper supply of ammunition.

III. The protection of the mercantile ports of the United Kingdom.

IV. The protection of the principal ports and coaling depots of our colonial possessions.

V. The provision of complete equipment and stores of every description, with proper storehouse accommodation for two army corps on a war footing, and clothing and equipment for the whole of the reserve.

VI. The provision of such equipment and stores (including guns of

position) as are necessary to enable the whole of the remaining troops, regular and auxiliary, which can be called out in the United Kingdom, to take the field or be employed in garrison duty.

VII. The construction of an arsenal and a camp of instruction in the north of England.

Any estimate of the various measures mentioned must necessarily be more or less vague ; but approximate estimates are requisite in order to allow of considerations being given to the manner in which the funds can be best provided.

I. For some few years past there has been a general feeling throughout the country that, with reference to the growth of foreign navies, the English fleet is not maintained at the preponderating and superior strength which is necessary for the security of the empire. So that, besides being made powerful enough to undertake the extra duty—which, as already pointed out, our fleet should be prepared for—it ought also to be increased to such strength as will enable it to more than hold its own in the defence of our shores and the protection of our commerce in all parts of the world.

The recent disclosures which have been wrung from the Admiralty regarding the deterioration of the Fleet during recent years, and its insufficiency to deal with any serious emergency, have marked out the strengthening of the Navy as the primary and most pressing step to be taken towards national insurance. It cannot be said that the measures which the Admiralty has undertaken, or the expenses which it contemplates incurring, give much assurance of the restoration of England to the first place among naval powers ; and it will be well

that the public should realise that its safety is concerned in pressing for still further activity in our dockyards and arsenals. What the Government has recently done has been merely to provide the means of allaying immediate and well-founded panic; what the circumstances of the country require is a naval establishment that will render us independent of the outcome of European complications, as well as serve to protect our possessions scattered over the globe, whenever these may be in difficulty. A sum of between 4 and 5 millions (*in addition* to the annual grants made by Parliament) would likely be necessary to bring our fleet up to the required strength; and there are probably few Englishmen who would grudge the expenditure of this sum — especially if the money could be provided without causing any immediate increase of taxation.

II. As regards the strengthening and efficient arming of the works defending our naval arsenals, the British public are probably not aware that the fortifications decided on in 1860 for this purpose, at a cost of $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions, are not yet in a completely efficient condition. A part of the armament has still to be supplied and mounted; and it is believed that for all the guns now in position the necessary ammunition has not yet been provided. It must be remembered that during the quarter of a century (nearly) which has elapsed since these works were designed, very great improvements have taken place in the construction and armament of ironclads. It is a great mistake to imagine that when once our fortifications are constructed, armed, and paid for, there is an end of the matter, and that we may rest satisfied that we

have done everything that is necessary regarding them. For the works to be of use, it is absolutely necessary that they should keep pace with the improvement in the means of attack. In these days of constant change and progress in the means of attack and defence, there is no standing still in fortification any more than in other matters. To meet the increased range of artillery, new works more in advance must be constructed; heavier guns, to correspond with the more powerful armaments of foreign fleets, must be mounted; larger magazines must be built, bomb-proof cover increased, and various other matters attended to. The land defences of Chatham, which, besides affording protection to the dockyard, are of very great strategical importance as regards the defence of the south of England against invasion, should also be pushed rapidly to completion. The proper arming of all our forts, and the provision of a proper supply of ammunition, is also a question for very serious consideration. The large guns used in the present day, and the powder and projectiles they require, cannot be manufactured at short notice, nor can supplies of them be obtained when required from private manufacturers. With its average establishment and rate of work, the arsenal at Woolwich cannot turn out, within the twelvemonth, more than about six guns of the most powerful type now made. It can hardly require any argument to show that, if the safety of England is dependent on the efficiency of her fleet, it is imperative that the country should provide thoroughly strong and secure shelter, where our men-of-war can be built and fitted out, lie in reserve, and return to during war, to be refitted and replenished with ammunition and

stores. For the completion and improvement of our maritime and marine defences (including the land defences of Chatham), for their armament, and a proper reserve of ammunition, probably from 2½ to 3 millions sterling will be required.

III. The next point for consideration is the protection of our principal mercantile ports, which, with their fleets of large merchantmen and warehouses full of products from all parts of the globe, now lie at the mercy of any enterprising enemy possessing a few heavily armed moderate-sized men of war.

The Humber, the Tyne, Sunderland, Hartlepool, the Firth of Forth, Aberdeen, the Clyde, and Liverpool, all require efficient forts, covering torpedo defences. Unless these ports are properly protected, the commercial damage which might be done, not only to this country, but to friendly powers trading with us, in the course of a few days of war time, would be incalculable. It would be no use when war appeared imminent to begin the construction of new defences. The time available would scarcely be sufficient to prepare the plans of what appeared advisable to undertake. All available guns and ammunition—which would amount to a very small supply—would probably be required for the protection of our naval dockyards, and even if a few were obtainable, their transport, mounting, and platform accommodation are not affairs which can be carried out hurriedly at a few days' notice. Many people imagine that our ports can be quickly and effectively defended by laying down torpedoes. But any one who has given any thought to the subject is aware that torpedoes without guns to cover them are useless. An enemy's boat could easily remove all the tor-

pedoes we might put down, unless we had guns to prevent his boats approaching the sites occupied. Moreover, the proper placing of torpedoes, even if they would be of use by themselves, is a matter which requires considerable care and knowledge, and at the present moment we have neither the torpedoes, the stores necessary to explode them, nor sufficient officers and men who understand their use, to allow of their being laid down in any large numbers.

IV. It is quite possible that this country might be at war with some foreign power, whose object would not be to invade us, but to do all the injury possible to our commerce, and this could most easily be effected by the bombardment of our trading ports, and by the destruction of the fleets lying in them. Take, for instance, the United States. Although we all know that with that country war is *most improbable*, still we must not overlook its possibility. At the present moment the American fleet could not do us much harm, but it requires no great stretch of imagination to suppose, that after an exhausting war with some European power, during which the United States had been gradually arming, we might find ourselves, through Canadian or Fenian complications, involved in a war with that country. Russia also, as regards any part of the world except Asia, could only hope to seriously injure us through our commerce. With a few powerful cruisers, whether *bonâ fide* belonging to her own fleet, or equipped and manned in some foreign country, or on the high seas, she would be able to inflict serious damage on our mercantile ports in their present defenceless state, with very little risk to her own ships.

The sum of 3 millions sterling would probably be required for the construction and armament of the forts, and for the torpedo defences necessary for the protection of our mercantile ports.

From questions which were asked in the House of Lords during a recent session of Parliament, it appears that a Royal Commission, presided over by Lord Carnarvon, has reported on the steps necessary to put our possessions abroad into a proper state of defence, and we may feel certain that, with a chairman of such well-known ability, the recommendations put forward are such as will meet all the requirements of the case. The question, however, which it is desirable to have answered is, whether the Government intend to act upon the recommendations submitted to them. Probably the report of the Royal Commission is now being referred from one department to another for consideration: each department consulted will have a nibble at it, and individuals whose knowledge is confined to parts of it only, will suggest alterations here and amendments there, which in all probability will not only very much detract from the value of the original recommendations, which have been considered and made as a whole, and from a wide comprehensive point of view, but will also very seriously delay any active steps being taken in the matter. It may, however, be concluded that the Government is fully alive to the necessity of taking effectual measures for the protection of our commerce abroad, and of our colonial possessions, and we must only trust that imperial necessities may not in this case be sacrificed to the requirements of party government.

The cost of the fortifications, their armament, the torpedo ap-

pliances, and floating defences which would be required to make our foreign and colonial possessions secure, will probably amount to between 4 and 5 millions sterling, of which the colonies would probably pay a share. The cost to fall on the mother country would not perhaps exceed 3 millions.

V. The next question for consideration is the provision of equipment and stores of every description, to enable two army corps on a war footing to take the field, and clothing and equipment for the whole of the reserve. Lord Wolseley, in his evidence before the Select Committee on the Channel Tunnel, is reported in the 'Times' to have said, with reference to our sending a force abroad: "The most men that we could possibly put into the field after some months would be about 70,000." The strength he mentions is about that of two army corps. But it must be remembered that, although we might with two corps strike an effective blow if we act at once, to do the same work "after some months, would probably require four or five corps. It is not the men that would fail us, for those with the colours and in the reserve would be more than ample for two army corps. It is the clothing, equipment, and stores of every description which would be deficient. If all the men in the reserve were now to be called out, it is believed that at least three months would elapse before they could be all properly clothed and equipped. The stores we now hold of tunics, helmets, greatcoats, boots, belts, etc., would be quite insufficient to supply what is required at any particular moment. At certain times before the issue of the annual supplies of clothing, which are calculated to meet the require-

ments of the troops with the colours only, we might, by keeping the old clothes longer in wear, be in a better position to fit out our reserve men than at other times; but we shall never be in the position we ought to be in, until the necessity is recognised of holding a reserve of clothing and equipment, specially intended for, and sufficient for, the whole of the reserve men. This, of course, means extra expense; but this need be incurred once only, and this reserve of clothing and equipment could be kept in good condition and of the latest pattern by giving it out when the annual issues are made, and replacing it by new articles at the same time.

Many people have an idea that everything can be done with money. So it can be, if plenty of time be available, but not otherwise. Take the question of the supply of soldiers' belts, for instance, and let any one who imagines that it is only necessary to pay a long price in order to obtain what is required, inquire what amount of leather suitable for the purpose is likely to be available in the market on an emergency. Leather being a perishable article, merchants do not venture to keep a larger stock on hand than is required to meet ordinary demand; and consequently, when the Government wish to have a large order executed at once, it is found that it cannot be done.

The same difficulty would be found with regard to the extra harness and saddlery required for the artillery and the cavalry. Then, again, all the waggons, carts, and harness, to complete our regimental transport and departmental transport, have to be provided. For these purposes large supplies of seasoned wood of different descriptions are required, skilled work-

men and efficient overseers are necessary. These cannot all be supplied at a few days' notice. It is very doubtful if we have now in store sufficient waggons, carts, and harness to equip one army corps on a war footing.

Another point of very great importance, as regards the clothing, equipment, and waggons, &c., required, is that their storage should be decentralised. Imagine the press of work and confusion that would arise in the large arsenal at Woolwich if all our forces were suddenly called out, simply in the receiving and storing of the immense amount of war material which, in the course of the first month or two, would be daily delivered there by contractors. Add to this, at the same time, the examination, manufacture, testing, packing, and despatch of innumerable articles of all descriptions to all parts of England, and we may almost say to all parts of the world, and we shall then see no great cause to wonder if delays and mistakes would be numerous and fatal. All regimental clothing, equipment, and transport should, as far as possible, be stored locally, so that on the outbreak of war there may be no delay in obtaining what is required, and the great strain which must otherwise be put on Woolwich may be removed. We have now, at the headquarters of regimental districts and of artillery brigades, depots where everything required by our troops to put them on a war footing may conveniently be stored; and as regards the cavalry, it would not be difficult to select a few military stations in different parts of the country which would prove equally convenient for that arm.

This is the plan which is adopted by the large military powers of the Continent, which, as a rule

keep at the territorial depot of each regiment the whole of the clothing and equipment of its reserve men, and the regimental transport allowed on a war footing.

Proper store buildings and sheds would have to be constructed, but the cost of these need not be very great. For these, and for the clothing, equipment, waggons, harness, &c., to be placed in them, from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 million pounds would probably be ample.

It is a curious thing that the country should go to the expense of training and maintaining a large reserve, but should not provide the means necessary to make it of use. The fact of the matter is, that the necessity for doing so is only becoming apparent as the reserve is gradually growing in strength. But if this necessity is recognised and accepted, we shall then be in a more efficient military position than this country has ever been in, in recent times. We shall be able to put 70,000 men into the field at a few days' notice, so equipped as to be ready to undertake active operations at once. This force would be available for service abroad, or as a nucleus round which we could organise all our available forces in case of invasion.

VI. We now come to point VI., which has been noted for consideration, and which is the provision of such equipment and stores (including guns of position) as are necessary to enable the whole of the remaining troops, regular and auxiliary, which can be called out in the United Kingdom, to take the field or be employed, in garrison duty. For the regular troops all necessary clothing and equipment should be available in the supply of these articles to be maintained for the special use of the

reserve, and a reduced amount of transport for home service would have to be provided. Lord Wolseley is reported to have said of our auxiliary forces that "they are men with muskets; I will not call them soldiers." The question to be considered is, what is necessary to make them soldiers? Supposing England to be threatened with invasion, it is probable that we should have about six weeks' time in which to make our preparations. With hard work in that period, a great deal might be done towards fitting our militia and volunteers for the duties of active service; but their field equipment and transport could not be supplied to them in six months, and probably not in a year; and without these, they would not be in a condition to take the field. What is required as regards the men of the auxiliary forces is, that they should have greatcoats, the valise equipment, including of course pouch, boxes for ammunition, water-bottles, and canteens. To equip all our troops properly with these articles, both time and money will be necessary. It may also be added that the sooner the whole of our infantry are armed with the same and the best pattern rifle available, the better it will be for their efficiency in the field. The amount of transport that would be necessary to enable our troops to undertake active operations in England need not be large. All corps would require waggons to carry one day's rations (in addition to what the men carried on the person), and these waggons would be used to fetch provisions from the nearest depot, which probably would be at a railway station at an average of ten miles' distance from the corps. Carts would be required for ammunition, and a small proportion of tools should also be carried. The

details of transport to be furnished to corps could easily be settled by a committee, and the manner in which they should be stored when given over to the charge of corps, as they should be, could also be considered. There is one very important point as regards the equipment of our auxiliary forces which requires very early attention, and that is, that a certain proportion of our militia and volunteer artillery regiments should be furnished with guns of position. These guns would require very little manœuvring, and, in most cases, all that would be necessary would be to move them into position on the field of battle. Unless guns are provided as suggested, we should take the field with a terrible deficiency of artillery. It ought, with proper management, to be in our power to overwhelm any invading force with the superior weight and number of our guns, for it is evident that an invader could not bring with him either many or heavy guns, owing to the difficulties of sea transport, both as regards material and horses.

In his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Channel Tunnel, Lord Wolseley is reported in the 'Times' to have stated, that if the whole of the 500,000 men which could be put under arms in this country were hurried out, they would be wholly unsupported by the necessary field artillery, the number of guns practically which are horsed in England being about 210 or 220; and 1600 guns would be necessary for a force of 500,000 men.

This is a fact about which there can be no dispute, and which must be perfectly well known at the War Office; but so far as the outside public are aware, no steps whatever are being taken

to remedy our deficiencies in this respect.

The provision of personal equipment, transport, and guns of position, would probably cost about 1½ million pounds.

VII. The construction of an arsenal and a camp of instruction in the north of England have for some years been recognised as the most pressing military necessities of the United Kingdom. The rashness of trusting all our eggs in one basket at Woolwich, as is at present done, is only too evident. Woolwich captured by an invading force, there would be but little use in endeavouring to continue the contest in other parts of the country. Moreover, as has been already pointed out, the strain on our one arsenal in time of emergency would be so great as probably to lead to hopeless confusion and an utter breakdown. It must be remembered that Woolwich is at present the only manufacturing arsenal for both the army and the navy. An arsenal in the north would be well placed as regards security, in case of any attack being made on London, and would be well situated as regards labour, material, and fuel. A camp of instruction for the assembly of regular troops and auxiliary forces from the northern counties, and where a field army could be collected after mobilisation, would be a very great convenience from every point of view. Government already possess considerable rights over the tract of country near York known as Strensall Common, and it would be a great advantage if all rights to the occupation of the ground were acquired, and a camp established there without delay.

The formation of the arsenal and the camp of instruction would probably swallow up 2 million pounds sterling.

It is necessary now to recapitulate reference has been made, and to state the various measures to which total their cost.

I. Strengthening of the navy,	£4,500,000
II. Strengthening and efficient arming of the works defending our naval arsenals and ports, and a due supply of ammunition,	8,000,000
III. The protection of the mercantile ports of the United Kingdom,	8,000,000
IV. The protection of the principal ports and coaling depots of our colonial possessions,	8,000,000
V. The provision of complete equipment and stores of every description, with proper storehouse accommodation for two army corps on a war footing, and clothing and equipment for the whole of the reserve,	2,000,000
VI. The provision of such equipment and stores as are necessary to enable the whole of the remaining troops, regulars and auxiliary, which can be called out in the United Kingdom, to take the field, or be employed in garrison duty,	1,500,000
VII. The construction of an arsenal and camp of instruction in the north of England,	2,000,000
	<u>19,000,000</u>
Say	£20,000,000

This amount could not be spent at once. With the utmost endeavours, it is doubtful if all the work for which the money would be required could be completed in less than five years. For this time, we should therefore have an extra annual charge of 4 millions to meet. This amount could surely be raised, without any strain on our resources, by the creation of a series of terminable annuities. The National Debt Act will insure the diminution of the National Debt by 173 millions in twenty years. Supposing the 20 millions required for our national insurance were to be provided as here suggested, with the result that at the end of twenty years the National Debt, instead of being diminished by 173 millions, were diminished by 150 or 160 millions only, surely no one in this country will have suffered any hardship in the meantime. Millions are found without difficulty for the main drainage of London, for the purchase of the telegraphs, for opening up certain thoroughfares in the metropolis, and probably will be found as easily for the

purchase of the works and business of the London waterworks companies. What is 20 millions compared to the cost that would be entailed on this country if it became engaged in war with any European power? The expenditure of the 20 millions required would have the twofold effect of rendering war more unlikely, and, if it took place, of insuring, as far as it is possible to do, that it shall be successful.

It is further to be noted that the whole of this sum of 20 millions, with the exception of a small amount for local labour in the Colonies, will be expended in the United Kingdom. The State will spend on national work the sum of 4 millions sterling, nearly the whole of which will find its way into the pockets of the working classes in the shape of wages. From this point of view, the proposal now put forward ought to meet with the approval of the Government now in power; and as the Conservatives claim to take a special interest in the maintenance of the integrity of the em-

pire, it ought also to meet with their support.

But this should not be a party question: it must be a national question, about which, if men would take the trouble to think it out carefully, there should be no difference of opinion. England is such an overpopulated country, that not only its prosperity, but even its existence, is dependent on the maintenance of its power and possessions in undiminished security. Within the limits of the United Kingdom, there is scope neither for the employment of the large amount of capital accumulated in the country, nor for its large and energetic population. If we cannot continue to hold our own, our daily food supply will not even be secure to us.

The amount of 20 millions to increase our means of self-defence is but a trifle compared to the large sums which have been spent on fortifications and armaments since the Franco-German war by the two powers engaged in it. France is really the only European power which by itself would be able to undertake the invasion of England, and she continues to increase her navy far beyond any possible requirements of the colonial wars in which she is likely to be engaged. Every day appears to increase the probability of our becoming embroiled with that

Power; and although the Government may at times think it expedient to give way on disputed questions, it must be remembered that there are certain lengths beyond which the people of this country will not go, and if once national animosities are aroused, it will not be within the power of any Ministry to prevent a war.

At the present moment there are questions simmering in Egypt, China, Africa, Madagascar, and the Western Pacific, which may boil over and bring about a war with France or Germany at any moment. We should have no European ally on whom we could depend for assistance, and most of the Powers would not look with disapproval on two of the richest countries in the world doing their utmost to injure and impoverish one another.

The present inefficient condition of our national defences is almost enough to tempt foreign Powers to attack us. If we were strong, as we ought to be, and easily could be, there is not a Power in the world that would venture to try our strength. Being a peace-loving nation, it is our duty to take the best means available to prevent war, and there is no surer way of doing this than by acting up to the old motto—

Si vis pacem, para bellum.

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL FAILURES.

WHATEVER may be thought of the manner in which Mr Gladstone's Cabinet have dealt with the British Constitution at home, it will hardly be disputed that their conduct of our foreign and colonial policy has awakened a feeling of profound distrust throughout the country. The fervid eloquence of Mr Gladstone in 1879-80 convinced the public mind that the policy of Lord Beaconsfield had been one of annexation, of aggression, and generally of a warlike tendency, and largely influenced the votes of those upon whom the results of such a policy were alleged to have fallen in the shape of increased taxation. But the electors who, actuated by feelings of this description, assisted to turn out the Conservative administration, forgot or were unaware of the fact that results of the same kind, and even of a graver character, will almost inevitably follow a policy of vacillation and uncertainty. When the history of our times comes to be written by an impartial hand, nothing will be more striking than the contrast between the professions and the actions of the Governments over which Mr Gladstone has presided. Abhorring war, they have been continually engaged in warfare; detesting annexation, they have annexed more territory than any previous British Government; straining every nerve to escape from responsibility, they have incurred far heavier responsibilities than those from which they shrank. It is as if some malignant fate had pursued them from the very first, turned their counsel into folly, and forced them forward

upon the very paths which they had resolved to avoid. True, they have consistently and perseveringly asserted that all their misfortunes have arisen from the faults and follies of their predecessors; but the credulity even of those most willing to be deceived has its limits, and for some time past reasonable men have seen that this excuse, feeble and flimsy at first, can no longer be advanced with common decency.

The impartial portion of the press—notably two journals, the 'Times' and 'Pall Mall Gazette,' which have constantly supported Mr Gladstone's Government—have condemned portions of its foreign and colonial policy with a severity as great as could have been expected from political opponents; and from one end of Great Britain to the other, a feeling is prevalent that British interests are unsafe in the hands to which they are at present intrusted. If this feeling were in any respect opposed to the facts of the case, we should be bound, as patriots, to expose its fallacy, and, even at the expense of party feeling, to uphold the Government. Unhappily, no such course is possible under existing circumstances; and the more we look into the matter, the more surely shall we find that the hesitating, weak, and uncertain action of our Foreign and Colonial Offices have brought Great Britain into a state of humiliation unprecedented in the annals of her history.

Nor is this unfortunate state of affairs confined to one part of the world, in which case one might hope to have success on one side to set off against failure on an-

other. Wherever we look, we find a remarkable and monotonous uniformity of failure, such as can have no other effect than to lower the prestige and reputation of Great Britain, discredit her diplomacy, weaken her power, and bring down to zero her influence among the nations of the world. Let any unprejudiced observer contrast the position and influence of our country when Lord Beaconsfield left office with that which she now occupies and possesses, and fairly ask himself whether congratulation or commiseration is the more appropriate feeling. There might, indeed, be found persons who would be entirely comforted if, with diminished influence and degraded position, we could point to peace, plenty, and reduced taxation as counterbalancing advantages conferred by Mr Gladstone's Government. Alas! this comfort is denied to us. Our relations with European powers, if peaceful, are certainly more strained and less cordial than in 1880; whilst in Egypt and South Africa we are engaged in operations which even the Prime Minister must confess to be very nearly akin to a state of warfare, and which are certainly not consistent with a peaceful condition of affairs. Plenty, alas! but mocks us with its presence; for the causes which have diminished the price of the labourer's loaf have operated to deprive him of the means of obtaining it, and our agricultural population was never in a more depressed and precarious condition—injurious affecting, as must of necessity be the case, every other class of the community. As to taxation, the promises of a lightening of the burdens of the people are so far from having been fulfilled, that we have at this moment an in-

creased income-tax, to supplement a declining revenue and to enable the men who came into office upon a cry of peace to carry on with sufficient vigour the wars into which their halting and feeble policy have plunged their country.

Whilst, however, we condemn the Cabinet as a whole for conduct so inconsistent with their duty to their Sovereign and their country, it is right that we should point more directly to those two Ministers who, each in his separate department, are personally responsible for much of the evil which we have to deplore. For had the seals of the Foreign Office been in the hands of a strong man instead of in those of Lord Granville, and had the Colonial Office been administered by a statesman less infirm of purpose and, with more backbone than Lord Derby, it is impossible that matters could have drifted into their present condition. Lord Granville is the most courteous, most gentle, most charming of men; and in quiet and uneventful times, when everything is smooth and easy, and a namby-pamby policy can do nobody any harm, nobody can regulate such a policy more pleasantly than Lord Granville. But the moment that something more is required than courtly manners, soft phrases, and diplomatic nothings, the man is not strong enough for the place. No one can read the recently published correspondence between the German Foreign Office and our own, without becoming conscious that Lord Granville displayed a conspicuously painful inferiority throughout, and so managed, or rather mismanaged, matters, that his country was made to occupy a position which would really be ludicrous, if the issues involved were

not too serious for laughter. That Great Britain should ever have been so situated as to have declined, in the first instance, to extend British protection to German residents upon the African coast, because that coast was not British territory; then to have protested against the annexation by Germany of the regions, the ownership of which she had so emphatically repudiated; and finally, to have yielded submissively to the imperious language of Prince Bismarck,—that to such a situation the weak shilly-shally diplomacy of Lord Granville should have brought his country, is in itself a condemnation of the Minister which it needs no argument to enforce. A Minister who has not only held the seals of the Foreign Office more than once, but has also been Colonial Minister, should surely have had sufficient knowledge and experience to have escaped the snare so cleverly laid for him by the German diplomatist. It is doubtless true that Lord Granville's tenure of office as Colonial Secretary was short, and that he never showed such an interest in the colonies as should be felt by any one who undertakes that important office. But it argues incapacity or indolence to an extraordinary degree if Lord Granville was unacquainted with the important bearing which German colonisation in South Africa must have upon the future of our British colonies in that quarter of the globe; and the manner in which the question has been dealt with by the British Government may well be resented by every one who estimates these colonies at their proper value. Common sagacity, moreover, without special knowledge, and ordinary firmness, without superhuman courage, should

have enabled the Foreign Minister of Great Britain to have taken a tone to which the Government of Germany could not have objected, and which would have secured without difficulty to Great Britain and her colonies a position which it may now be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain without grave complications. Unhappily both the firmness and the sagacity appear to have been wanting in Lord Granville, and the whole affair must be considered most damaging to his reputation as a Statesman and a Minister.

It must be borne in mind that this South African difficulty did not come upon Lord Granville by any means as a surprise. So long ago as the summer of 1880, Lord Kimberley, then Colonial Secretary, transmitted to the Foreign Office a translation from an article in a Berlin newspaper, which not only discussed the proposed establishment of a German colony in South Africa, but claimed the Transvaal Boers as "nearly allied to Germans by speech and habits," declared that Germany should have opposed the annexation of the Transvaal, suggested the desirability of her acquiring Delagoa Bay, and was couched throughout in a spirit of hostility to Great Britain. Unable to grasp the importance of the subject to British South Africa, Lord Granville appears to have confined himself to an inquiry of the British Ambassador at Berlin as to the "probable success" of a German colony in South Africa, and to have been perfectly satisfied with the reply that "the German Government feel more the want of soldiers than of colonists, and consequently discourage emigration." This, no doubt, was perfectly true at the moment; but it does not diminish

the importance of the fact that the attention of our Government was specially called to a subject which might at any moment become—as it has become—one of great importance to our South African colonies, and that had the Ministers specially responsible been possessed of sufficient wisdom to have inquired into the actual condition of affairs and the feelings of the Cape Government, it is very probable that the “Angra Pequena” difficulty, which did not come into notice for nearly three years after, would never have existed at all. But, as usual, indolence or incapacity allowed the matter to sleep, and, as far as we have gone, the results of the policy of our Government may be summed up in the words of Lord Derby’s apologetic despatch to Sir Hercules Robinson of December 4, 1884, in which he remarks that it is “too LATE for this country to take action as far as the Angra Pequena territory is concerned;” and that it only “remains to consider what should now be done to protect British colonial interests from any inconvenience which might possibly result from the presence of a foreign settlement on the frontier of the colony.” “A lame and impotent conclusion” of a diplomatic correspondence, in which it is difficult to say whether Mr Gladstone’s Foreign or Colonial Minister shows to most disadvantage.

Nor, indeed, is the reputation of Lord Granville exalted, if we turn our attention to other diplomatic performances during the past year. It will be borne in mind that when the miserably timid and vacillating policy of the present Government had led us into an expenditure upon the Upper Nile of which no man can yet calculate the amount, it was not long before it became ap-

parent that the finances of Egypt were in a state within a measurable distance of bankruptcy. True to its fundamental principle of endeavouring to shift responsibility on to other shoulders, Mr Gladstone’s Government proposed a Conference, which was to free them from all their difficulties. It will not be forgotten that, in order to secure the support of France to their proposals, our Government entered into a preliminary agreement with the French Government by which such concessions were proposed to be made by England as awakened the indignation of the country, and threatened to place Mr Gladstone and his Cabinet in such a disagreeable position with even their own supporters, that the Prime Minister was actually obliged to come down to the House of Commons and announce, with an ill-concealed feeling of relief, that failure of the Conference which enabled him to get quit of the French agreement. It may be said, and of course truly said, that the whole Cabinet were responsible for both Conference and agreement; but had we been so fortunate as to have had a Palmerston at the Foreign Office, or indeed any statesman of vigour, capacity, and determination, such an agreement would never have been submitted to a British Cabinet. The cavalier dismissal of the Conference by Lord Granville—the mission of Lord Northbrook, and its somewhat ignominious failure—and the generally weak and equivocal policy of the Gladstone Government with regard to Egypt,—have naturally encouraged other European Powers to advance their own pretensions, and to slight those of Great Britain, so that, according to present appearances, the opportunities for wise and

vigorous action in Egypt, having been thrown away again and again by the feeble statesmen who rule us, we have nothing before us but increased expenditure and further complications, which might have been avoided if we had possessed a Government blessed with the power of knowing its own mind, and capable of acting with that promptitude and vigour which, in the action of nations as well as that of men, are essential conditions of success. It is of course possible that Lord Wolseley's achievements may cause the British public to forget the blunders of the past, and condone the errors of the Government. Those blunders and errors, however, will have cost the British taxpayer an enormous sum before the final account is made up, and, far worse than this, they will have cost that which is of greater value than gold, namely, the blood of thousands of men who have fallen for no other reason than because the British Government lacked the courage to discharge the duties and responsibilities which it had voluntarily taken upon itself, and which would have been honourably and adequately discharged if our Government had been in the hands of men worthy of the confidence of the people of England.

The misdoings of our Foreign and Colonial Offices have been so interwoven during the past year, that it is not always easy to separate one from the other; but if special blame is to be attributed to Lord Granville, even a larger portion must be cast upon the shoulders of his colleague. The relations between Great Britain and her colonies have furnished the theme for so much writing and so many Parliamentary debates, that it is difficult to avoid treading on

old ground in recurring to the subject. It may well be remembered that, previous to and during the existence of Mr Gladstone's first Government, accusations were frequently made against the Liberal party upon the score of their coldness towards the colonies and disregard of colonial feeling. These accusations were certainly not without foundation as regarded certain members of the party attacked, who had spoken of "letting the colonies go free," and both in speeches and pamphlets had pointed, with seeming satisfaction, or at best with indifference, to the possible alienation from Great Britain of certain of her larger colonies. But upon the part of the Government itself these accusations were again and again refuted and repelled, and a practical answer was given to the assertion that the Liberals were unwilling to extend our colonies by the annexation of considerable territories to our colonial empire. Between 1868 and 1874, under the Colonial Secretaryship of Lord Kimberley, we acquired the Dutch forts at Elmina, in the regions of West Africa, but for which the difficulties of Sir Garnet Wolseley in the Ashantee war would have been infinitely greater than those which he actually had to encounter. The Ashantees had always been the allies of the Dutch, and had Elmina remained in the hands of the latter, the additional cost and trouble to the British expedition can hardly be estimated. Under the same Colonial Secretary, the gold fields of South Africa were annexed; and although the actual accomplishment of the annexation of the Fiji Islands was left to the Conservative administration of 1874, it is undeniable that the inquiry into the condition of these islands, by direction of Lord Kim-

berley, had, as was probably his intention, paved the way for that annexation, which could not have been avoided had Mr Gladstone's Government remained in office. Enough was done, at any rate, during the existence of that Government, to remove from the Liberal party, as a party, the stigma of being indifferent to the prosperity of our Colonial Empire, or averse to its extension.

Indeed, since that period the school of anti-colonial politicians would seem to have so far died out, or at least to have shrunk from the advocacy of opinions evidently out of harmony with the spirit of the nation, that on a very recent occasion, when a dinner was given at the "Empire Club" to the Canadian Prime Minister, Sir J. A. MacDonald—the most eminent of living colonists—Lord Derby himself is reported to have commented upon the fact that the above-named school had practically ceased to exist, and that men of all parties appeared now to be agreed upon the value of her colonies to Great Britain, and to vie with each other in the expression of the patriotic desire that the relations between colonies and mother country might be drawn closely and still more closely together. In view of this remark, which drew cheers from an appreciative audience, what has Lord Derby himself done to promote the object which "men of all parties" have in view? It may be conceded that Lord Derby is a cold-blooded man; that from him no enthusiasm upon any subject is to be expected; and that it would be contrary to his nature and character to take any bold and vigorous steps in the direction of an active colonial policy. Nay, more, it may be admitted that the

advantage which Lord Derby has enjoyed of viewing every important question of the day from the point of view of a Cabinet Minister of both political parties, has not diminished but increased that constitutional difficulty in making up his mind, which has been so fatal a blemish to his career as a statesman. The want of decision is one of the greatest wants with which a politician can be afflicted, and it is a want painfully conspicuous in the present Colonial Secretary. But there are some questions upon which this failing becomes a positive crime against the country, and of little less than this has Lord Derby been guilty in his colonial administration. Of what use is it to mouth out high-sounding commonplaces at colonial banquets, or to make ostentatious declarations of regard for the interests of our colonies, if the utterer of such spurious patriotism neglects those interests again and again, slights the wishes and wounds the susceptibilities of colonists upon every occasion, and absolutely embarrasses and prevents that development of colonial resources, and extension of colonial power, which but for him would infallibly have taken place?

Again we say that, although Mr Gladstone's Cabinet as a whole must be responsible for what has been done, a Colonial Minister who knew his duty and had the courage to do it, would have been able to prevent the mischief. But what has Lord Derby done? Has he ever raised his voice in defence of colonial interests? Has he ever shown to our colonies that in the office in Downing Street their views would find support, their legitimate aspirations encouragement, and their desire to draw closer to the mother country would be appre-

ciated and valued? Can we read Lord Derby's despatches with any feeling of pride,—with satisfaction that they are the despatches of a British Minister, and with approval of the manner in which he deals with the important matters under discussion? No one who shares the sentiments professed by Lord Derby himself at the MacDonald Banquet can for a moment accord such approval. The 'Times' of 2d January accurately describes the general feeling, when it remarks in its first leading article: "The policy of Lord Derby is regarded both at home and in the colonies as feeble, vacillating, inconsistent, and unintelligible: his method of diplomacy is certainly not a happy one, nor have its results been satisfactory." Those who have studied colonial history, and have watched the progress and development of our larger colonies, know full well that one of the most important questions of the day is that which concerns the manner in which can be accomplished that closer alliance between mother country and colonies which is so much to be desired. There is no fear to-day that Great Britain will lose Australasia by any of the mistakes which lost her those American colonies which were once as loyal to the British connection as is Australasia at this moment. Nevertheless, there may be mistakes and blunders as great, though of a different nature. If the bond of union between Great Britain and her colonies is to continue and to be strengthened, it is evident that the former must do all she can to show the latter that they lose nothing by the connection, but, on the contrary, may look to it as something at least as advantageous to themselves as to the mother-country. Nothing can

prevent the colonies of Australasia from developing into communities of vast size and importance, and nothing can be more unwise than for the Ministers of Great Britain to do anything which might appear to indicate a desire to retard that development, or even a carelessness upon the subject. It is not merely development of an ordinary kind which has lately been the desire of Australasia—such as might be sought for the purpose of supplying the wants of a surplus population, or acquiring territory for the mere love of acquisition, or with an eye to possible needs in the future. That for which Australasia has been anxious has been to prevent the extension of French penal settlements, which would place the scum of European population within dangerous proximity to her shores, and the acquisition by Germany of territory the possession of which by any foreign Power might hereafter become a source of annoyance, if not of positive danger, to herself. It remains to be seen whether the first evil will be avoided; and no doubt there has been some difficulty and some delicacy in approaching France upon a subject which relates to her government of her own colonies. We do not wish to unfairly prejudge the action of her Majesty's Ministers in this respect; but we fail to discover in any speech or despatch of Lord Derby such an appreciation of the position of our Australian colonies, or such a determination to support their interests, as would have become the Colonial Minister of Great Britain. Delay—upon the plea of coming federation—vacillation—uncertainty—per-vade the proceedings of our Colonial Office; and if the ultimate result should be at all in accord-

ance with the legitimate desire of Australasia, it will certainly not be due to any display of energy or vigour upon the part of Lord Derby. But the very fact that it has been difficult to deal with France in her management of New Caledonia, should have opened the eyes of the British Government to the obvious impolicy of allowing another foreign Power to become possessed of territory adjacent to Australasia, with respect to which difficulties of a similar nature might hereafter arise. Our Australian colonies, alive to the danger, anxiously desired the annexation of New Guinea and the neighbouring islands. Again delay, again hesitation, again that lamentable want of sagacity to see, and courage to seize, the opportunity. Alarmed at the result of their blunders in Africa, the British Government, as usual, "too late," have proclaimed a British protectorate over a part of the southern coast of New Guinea; but unless our information is incorrect, Germany has taken possession of the northern part of the island and of other adjacent isles, and that which might and would have been acquired by and for the British colonies of Australasia, if they had either been independent communities or had received that support which they had a right to expect from the mother country, must now be either lost to them altogether or become the subject of negotiations and diplomatic arrangements with the German Government, which a little foresight, a little sagacity, and a little courage, might easily have prevented. Let it not be supposed that we object to the colonisation of unoccupied territories by other nations, or that we are jealous of German colonists. On the con-

trary, we concur entirely with the welcome which Mr Forster declares himself ready to give to German colonisers; and we believe that there is no other people who are likely to do more good to the world than colonists of the Teutonic race. But we also agree heartily with Mr Forster in the opinion, that in cases where there is reason to believe that the founding of a foreign settlement would check the progress or endanger the interests of a British colony, it is the duty of our Government to anticipate such settlement by co-operating with the Ministers of the colony affected, and being ready, if necessary, to hoist the British flag and assert the sovereignty of Great Britain. Instead of this, her Majesty's present advisers, though long since made cognisant of the natural and patriotic wish of our colonies to secure to Great Britain the territories which appeared so important to the future interests of Australasia, have actually interposed obstacles and created delay, as if purposely to court the interference of some foreign Power.

Writing upon the desire of New Zealand to annex for the same reason the Samoa Islands, the 'Daily News,' one of the staunchest supporters of the Government, casually observes that "the Home Government would never have taken over any portion of New Guinea, had it not been for the somewhat precipitate action of the Queensland authorities." This is a candid admission and shows how much need the Gladstone Cabinet has of pressure where decision and vigour are required. But instead of waiting until the natural impatience of colonists forces them to "precipitate action," surely the Home Government should have

suggested and supported that action long ago, in a matter where colonial and imperial interests were strictly identical, and where the loyalty of the colonists to the British crown and their fidelity to the British connection might properly have been stimulated by warm and hearty encouragement given from Downing Street to their legitimate aspirations. As the chronicle of failures to which we have alluded is brought in review before us, we ask ourselves in amazement—How long will public opinion submit to these things? The British public is indeed not easily roused, and assuredly of late years its apathy has been one of the most remarkable features of the age. Whether it is that the rapidity with which events move at the present time, and the regular and speedy succession in which the occurrences of every day are presented to the public eye, prevent their retention by the public mind, is a problem of which we must leave the solution to philosophers. Certain it is, at any rate, that events of the greatest importance appear to be forgotten with incredible celerity; and the memory of a disaster which would have roused the last generation of Englishmen to the utmost indignation against those who were responsible for its occurrence, endures but for a day, and apparently awakens no such righteous emotion.

So it has happened that under the auspices of the Gladstone Government we have seen our soldiers die unavenged and our flag dragged through the dirt in South Africa, and yet the nation has been silent. In the same regions of the world we have seen the pusillanimous abandonment not only of territory, but of faithful allies who had trusted to our strength and to our honour, and the nation has made

no sign. In Egypt, again, we have seen the champions of peace bombard Alexandria; the champions of Boer patriotism slaughter Arab "patriots," with at least as good title to the name as the Transvaal Boers; the champion of financial morality attempt a questionable juggle with Egyptian finance; and the champions of self-government prevent Egypt from governing herself, and yet shirk the responsibilities which by such action they had undertaken. We have seen the blood of Englishmen as well as Arabs shed like water,—and shed because Mr Gladstone's Government had not the courage to accept the consequences of their own acts, and direct the policy and actions of the country over which they had assumed the real and absolute control,—and yet the nation has but murmured. But the time is now at hand when such murmurings will become louder and more general, and when the British people will surely no longer endure the insults and rebuffs which the imbecility and indecision of the Gladstone Cabinet have brought upon them. It is indeed a marvellous instance of the talent of the Government, that they should have been able to set France and Germany against us at the same time, and should have exposed Great Britain to be simultaneously snubbed by both. Never, indeed, has our influence among European nations been at so low an ebb; never during the present century has our country been so isolated and so estranged from those continental allies which a wise and statesmanlike policy would have secured. An honest, bold, straightforward policy is always the safest, and it is the want of such which has lost us the esteem and respect of Continental

nations. This, no doubt, is incomprehensible to the Radicals who rule the Gladstone Cabinet, and therefore, unable to deny that our position with the Great Powers is more unsatisfactory than has been the case for many years, they have invented the ludicrous excuse that Prince Bismarck has a personal hostility to Mr Gladstone. It is very possible that the German Minister may entertain a less favourable opinion of the British Prime Minister than the tribe of sycophants who are never tired of singing his praises. We can easily believe this to be the case, because the two men have been cast in very different moulds, and Mr Gladstone's faults and weaknesses are precisely those which Prince Bismarck would despise. But to suppose that a man of the immense ability of the German Chancellor, charged with the heavy responsibilities of governing the country for which he has done so much, and actuated by the patriotic desire to serve her interests as the first and great object of his life, would allow himself to be influenced in the slightest degree by personal dislike to the Minister of another country, or would condescend, as the Radical scribes assert, to be connected with a Tory intrigue to drive Mr Gladstone from office, is a supposition so unlikely and so absurd, as to prove at once how miserable are the shifts to which the apologists of the Government are now driven. The truth is, that during the past year the Gladstone Administration have failed all round. They have carried their Reform Bill, indeed, but not until it had been made manifest to the country that it was a Bill which had the assent of both political parties, and could not fairly be claimed by either as

a party triumph. Moreover, even in this success they so mismanaged matters that, after lending themselves to a wicked but ineffective agitation against the House of Lords, they had to comply with the conditions for which that House had stipulated, and produce the whole of their scheme before any part of it became law. And for the rest of their doings, where are they to be found written? No legislative exploits, but a goodly record of legislative failures, at home. No financial triumphs, but a failure of financial schemes and an increased income-tax. No Irish content, but a new agitation already threatened, the anti-English party strengthened and united, and the seeds of Irish discontent spreading to Scotland, as the first-fruits of unprincipled land legislation. The agricultural interest in a condition which fills every thoughtful politician with alarm; the shipping and railway interest agitated by foolish attempts at inquisitorial and vexatious legislation; trade dull, commerce languishing, and a general want of confidence in merchants and capitalists. These are some of the results of our five years' enjoyment of Mr Gladstone's rule over us; and as if we had not enough to regret at home, the foreign and colonial policy for which his Government are responsible, stand condemned as an exhibition of incompetent folly such as British history has rarely chronicled of British statesmen. Their recent action in proclaiming a British protectorate in New Guinea, and again in hoisting the British flag on the coast of Zululand, only proves that, when it may in all probability be too late, they have known what were the steps which a British Government should

have taken long ago, and which British opinion would have approved. We should have stood better with Germany—better with France—better with every European Power, if we had known our own mind, set our foot down, and acted as the honour and interests of Great Britain required. Alas ! we are in the hands of men to whom such considerations come second to the necessity of keeping a Parliamentary majority together at any and every hazard ; and until the electoral body throughout the country awake to a knowledge of the weakness, vacillation, and incapacity which at present shield themselves behind the name of Mr Gladstone, Great Britain must be content to accept humiliation and shame from nations who are blessed with wiser, braver, and more patriotic statesmen.

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OUR EGYPTIAN ATROCITIES.

FROM CAPEL COURT TO KHARTOUM.

"FORTY centuries look down on you." So spoke the First Napoleon to his army of the Nile. "Forty centuries look down on you," may in a more solemn, if less dramatic sense, be said to-day to the British Government in Egypt. From the time of the Pharaohs, the valley of the Nile has been the theatre of great historical events. Wave after wave of conquest has rolled over it, and left it much the same. Dynasty after dynasty has oppressed it, and the fellaheen have bowed their necks meekly to all. Ever a fascinating bait for the military adventurer, it has felt the heel of Assyrian, Persian, Greek, and Roman. But in the long series of its conquests, there is nothing to parallel the unhappy condition which it presents at this moment. It has seldom, if ever, been so demoralised socially, and it was never so completely left without the poorest pretence of a Government. Had it been overrun by thirteenth-century Norsemen, it would have received some return for the sufferings inflicted on it, but the foreign occupation it now endures has hardly one alleviating feature. It has cut off the past, without opening up the slightest glimpse of a future. It has exacted from a long-suffering people great sacrifices, and, so far, it offers them not a ray of hope of compensation. The situation has grown up like a nightmare, without any visible origin or intelligible cause. Why there should be a British garrison at Cairo; why British troops should be fighting for their lives in the Soudan; why the fellaheen should curse in their hearts these brave fellows who are dying for them—Heaven only knows. The British Ministers who preside over the holocaust, and who in the eyes of the world are responsible for it, have even yet no definite idea on the subject. They have floundered out of one desperate expedient into another, until Egypt seems to have no room left for a fresh catastrophe. Insolvency, revolution,

conquest and anarchy she has undergone in turn, and now she stands on the brink of an Arab invasion, bringing untold atrocities in its train. Poor Egypt! The ten plagues were only the beginning of her troubles.

The Nile has been the grave of many a brilliant reputation: is it to swallow up Mr Gladstone's as it swallowed up Mark Antony's, and as it turned the tide of victory against Napoleon? A triple calamity like the fall of Khartoum, the murder of Gordon, and the isolation of the force that was to rescue him, is no ordinary reverse of arms. Humiliating as were Maiwand and Majuba Hill, this is an event of infinitely greater significance to its victims. It is a disaster suffered with the eyes of the world upon us, and which we cannot escape from by an ignominious convention, as we did from Majuba Hill. Cowardice itself could not lose hold of the Soudan until Gordon has been avenged and Khartoum recovered. The Upper Nile has to be regained if we are to remain in Egypt; and at the very time this catastrophe occurred, we were binding ourselves to remain, by solemn agreement with the European Powers. The very efforts of the Government to find a means of escape from an intolerable position, have fixed them more firmly in the meshes which they have all these years been weaving round themselves. For the fellaheen they have filled up the cup of affliction; but it has been fated that before they leave Egypt they shall fill to overflowing another cup. It will be one even more bitter than the first, and they will hold it to the lips of the British tax-payer. When the heart of the nation has been wrung with shame, and bowed down with sorrow, there will be the blood-money to pro-

vide. Moreover, while millions, and it may be tens of millions sterling, are being extracted from impoverished incomes, we shall still ask in vain why we are in Egypt, what we have been fighting for, and what the Ministerial policy was which has stained the Nile with wasted blood from Alexandria to Khartoum?

Great Britain has frequently been engaged in wars which the people followed with patriotic interest, and willingly made sacrifices for. But there was not till Khartoum fell a scintilla of such a feeling in this case. In the past we have fought for ideas which we deemed noble, or for objects which we thought essential to the well-being of the empire; but they were always clearly understood. Whatever errors diplomacy may have committed, the aim set before the nation was distinct and popular. Cromwell always knew what he unsheathed the sword for. Neither Chatham nor Pitt nor Palmerston struck blows at random, like a giant hitting in the dark. They required no help from the arts of sophistry and hair-splitting to justify themselves to their countrymen. They did not drift into war, and then discover that it was a heritage of woe from a malignant predecessor. To their honest minds it would have seemed culpably reckless, not to say criminal, to involve their country in bloodshed which was neither war nor peace, attack nor defence. Their first duty in a foreign complication was to have a policy, and to set foot nowhere without having thought out, with all the gravity and care befitting responsible statesmen, what they were to do. Such has never been Mr Gladstone's practice. Wherever the vital issue of peace or war has come before him, he has, to use Mr Goschen's apt phrase, "fumbled his cards." It is not

in his nature to face it with the courage of a statesman. He bandies words over it like a grammarian, and draws fine distinctions like a casuist. At last, when he seems to have involved himself inextricably in a cobweb of subtle reasoning, he breaks loose to strike some rash and unexpected blow. His campaigns are generally as abruptly cut short as they are rashly begun. To satisfy his conscience they must be perfectly fruitless, which he considers the acme of unselfishness. Hence Mr Gladstone has been to this country the costliest as well as the most disastrous of War Ministers. His victories have been as barren as his defeats have been humiliating and "bloodguilty."

During the past four years in Egypt, the inherent vice of his foreign policy has been glaringly attested beyond the expectation of his severest critics. He has lived all the time in a close atmosphere of egotistical illusions. In everything he has done, whether fighting Arabi Pasha and the Mahdi, or dictating to the Khedive at Cairo, or inviting dictation from the European Powers, he has worn a mask. At every turn he has made use of tools he would not acknowledge, and of puppets whose responsibility was a transparent sham. Even the heroic life which was nearest and dearest to British hearts was not too sacred to serve him for a pawn on his political chess-board. Outside of dissenting chapels, not a single soul has ever been greatly deceived by his devices for disguising from himself and others the plain duty which lay before him. His Penelope's web of makeshifts and plausible expedients fell asunder as it was woven; but he might have gone on indefinitely weaving it, had not his Nemesis been roused at last to strike him that crushing blow at Khartoum.

Before it, illusions, makeshifts, and fine phrases are swept away as by a whirlwind. A Gladstone policy in Egypt no longer exists. It has failed and discredited itself on all hands. Barely able to maintain order at Cairo, it has sustained in the same week a bitter check both in diplomacy and in the field. Thanks to it, Khartoum has been lost, Gordon sacrificed, Lord Wolseley's army imperilled; and our last hope of securing some slight relief for the cruelly taxed fellaheen has had to be given up. Our attempts to pose before Europe as the friend of the oppressed Egyptian peasantry have all ended in an arrangement with France, which secures to the bondholder his pound of flesh, and fixes the yoke more firmly than ever on the neck of Egypt. So far from having done any good to the fellaheen, or gained any advantage for them from the national creditors, their position has been made in many respects worse than before.

It is a melancholy but indisputable fact, that the original source of the misery in which Egypt is plunged is the old mean story of spendthrift and money-lender. Reckless borrowing, with its inevitable sequel, a bankrupt exchequer, was the opening chapter of this infamous episode, which has brought ruin on Egypt and shame on Great Britain. The ghastly horror of the climax is rendered more ghastly by comparison with the sordid pettiness of its origin. But for the bondholders we should have never interfered in Egypt; and it is a grim though not unprecedented satire on our maxim of State, that they have been more or less violated all along. Since the days of Cobden, it has been a doctrine of the Foreign Office that its authority cannot be used for collecting the debts of private individuals in

foreign countries. If her Majesty's subjects lend their money to foreign Governments, they are told that they do it at their own risk. Till recently this rule was strictly enforced, and by no Administration more so than by Mr Gladstone's. But after the foreign loan scandals of 1873, a new disposition began to be shown not to interpret the rule too strictly. In various cases of default, Egypt among the number, her Majesty's diplomatic agents in defaulting countries were permitted to render any services they could "unofficially," to distressed bondholders. Prince Bismarck has gone much farther than that; and it will be remembered how, on a critical occasion, he threw the whole weight of his authority into the bondholders' scale. It may be a long while before our own Foreign Office admits the precedent, but in spite of itself it is influenced by Prince Bismarck's practice. In 1875, Egypt, or rather the ex-Khedive, Ismail Pasha, had borrowed in London and Paris nearly 70 millions sterling. The various loans had been issued at a discount in some cases of as much as 20 per cent, and the fat commission given to bankers, brokers, and others, made a further heavy deduction. It was ascertained by Mr Cave in his investigation that not much more than 45 millions sterling in hard cash actually reached Egypt. The later loans were, to a considerable extent, swallowed up in interest on the earlier ones. As they proceeded, they grew in amount, and proportionately more of them was retained in this country to meet prior charges. Of the 1870 loan for 7 millions, only 5 millions really went to Egypt; and of the final 32 million loan in 1873, little more than 20 millions left this country.

The money that did go to Egypt was not made a very exemplary

use of. The ex-Khedive, Ismail Pasha, was a lavish spender. French by education and sympathy, he was an imitator of Napoleon III. The Second Empire, with its showy enterprise and pinchbeck brilliance, fascinated him. M. de Lesseps, his intimate friend from boyhood, had great influence over him. The sagacious Frenchman could get almost anything from him for the Suez Canal while it was in progress. Sixteen millions of his borrowing went into that important work, which is now a splendid investment for the original proprietors. But Ismail Pasha's other investments were of a different kind. He sank millions on millions in cotton plantations, which seldom if ever paid their working expenses—and on sugar-factories, most of which, we believe, are going to ruin. He was magnificent in his largesses, as well as in his enterprises. The backsheesh he paid at Constantinople might have excited the envy of Haroun Alraschid. On one occasion, when the Porte disputed his right to contract loans, he crossed the palms of the Grand Vizier of the day with a gratuity of £50,000. Next time the Grand Vizier could not help him, and he went direct to the Sultan. His Majesty's price was £900,000. Ismail obtained his new firman, and on the strength of it launched his last loan—the 32 million transaction of 1873. In view of the blunted moral sense of the British public in regard to this class of finance which approaches so dangerously near to card-sharping, the disgraceful history of Egyptian borrowing ought to be fearlessly and frankly told. We have indicated what stamp of man was the borrower-in-chief, the ex-Khedive. The financiers of Paris and London, who pandered to his fabulous extravagance, were pretty well exposed

in the investigations of the famous Foreign Loans Commission of ten or eleven years ago. Messrs. Fruhling and Goschen, the bankers for the first two loans—those of 1862 and 1864 came out of the ordeal unscathed, all their transactions having been legitimate and above-board; but their successors seem to have had peculiar methods of business, to say the least of it. The regular agency commissions, which should have satisfied most men, were the smallest part of their spoil. They manipulated the markets at the expense of the public, and they extracted from the ex-Khedive all the usual extras that a professional money-lender levies on his spendthrift clients.

An Egyptian loan of this period generally passed through three stages. In the first, advances were required by the Treasury for current expenses. They were obtained from the banks or wholesale usurers at Cairo, who charged from 12½ to 25 per cent interest on them, according to the necessities of the Government. As the Treasury bonds accumulated they declined in value, and at times of severe financial pressure they have fallen as low as 65. This was the chrysalis stage of the loan, generally distinguished as the "floating debt" period. The second stage opened with the negotiations in Paris and London for "funding the floating debt," as it was humorously called. The financiers, while they were driving the hardest bargain they could with Ismail's agents, bought up in Cairo the depreciated Treasury bonds, which they knew, of course, would be paid off if the intended new raid on investors should succeed. To minimise risk and simplify matters, it was sometimes stipulated that the Treasury bonds should be received as cash in payment of subscriptions. As compared with the innocent

bond fide subscriber, the syndicate had, in the third stage of the transaction, various material advantages. If the price to the public was 93, the syndicate would have secured beforehand an option to take all it wanted at, say, 88. While the public paid their 93 in cash, the syndicate would pay their 88 in paper purchased at 65. When the loan was a success, the syndicate behind the scenes would quietly increase their subscriptions, and compel the public to buy in the open market at an artificial premium. In other words, they could fleece the lenders with one hand, and the spendthrift borrower with the other. Under this pleasant system Ismail Pasha borrowed, between 1862 and 1873, rather more than 68 millions sterling,—fully as much as the total revenue of Egypt in the same period. But, as has been said, he received only some 45 millions in hard cash; and when he defaulted in 1875, there had been repaid in interest more than 35 millions sterling. Meanwhile the capital of the debt had increased to 72 millions sterling.

It is due to the Egyptian people, as well as to *bond fide* bondholders, to have these facts distinctly understood. In its inception and growth the public debt of Egypt was one of the greatest political iniquities known to this generation. It was contracted without the slightest reference to the wishes or the interests of the Egyptian people. Only 16 millions out of a total of 68 millions was expended on what has any claim to be considered a work of public utility. Many millions of it went into the privy purse of the ex-Khedive, and was spent, as we have indicated, in bribery, to say nothing of the "ropes of pearls" gallantly bestowed on opera-singers. In 1875 the bubble burst. Ismail Pasha, shut off from

his foreign sources of supply by the scandalous disclosures of 1873, could no longer raise the five millions sterling a year of interest for which he had made Egypt liable. The bondholders met and stormed, as bondholders always do at such disagreeable junctures. They passed and recorded the usual resolution to have a thorough investigation of the bankrupt's affairs. A representative of the highest social position and the most trustworthy character was needed to go to Cairo. The then paymaster of her Majesty's Forces, the late Mr Stephen Cave, was invited to undertake the mission, and he carried it out very ably. Most of the figures above quoted are from his exhaustive and edifying report. He gave the bondholders clearly to understand that only the strictest economy and prudence on the part of the Egyptian Government could secure their interest for them out of the normal revenue of the country. The next question was how to get such unknown and uncongenial virtues as economy and prudence introduced at Cairo. It was proposed to form a European Control Department, whose business it should be "to secure the punctual payment of the debt charges." This meant in effect that Ismail Pasha and his Ministers were not to be trusted with such a delicate operation as the management of an insolvent Treasury. If Egypt had been a powerful State, Ismail Pasha would have snapped his fingers in the face of his creditors; but, unhappily for him, he was only a third-rate defaulter, and there were various ways of putting the screw on him. It could be done at Cairo or at Paris, but most effectively at Constantinople. The Sultan was only too glad of an opportunity of reminding him, that brilliant and enterprising as he was, he had a suzerain.

The scheme of a European Control Department thus mooted in 1876 was highly approved at Paris, but it found no favour at the British Foreign Office. Lord Derby, our then Foreign Minister, was the man above all others qualified to forecast the consequences of such a dubious proposal. His superhuman caution saved him from yielding an inch to the new doctrine which was being urged on him of the duty of the Government to protect the private interests of its subjects abroad. He categorically refused to have anything to do with the "International Commission," which was the next proposal. But lest he should be considered too cold-blooded, he made a concession to the distressed bondholders: he "lent" them a British official, Mr Rivers Wilson, to represent them on the Commission, and he authorized our Consul-General at Cairo to grant "such unofficial assistance as he possibly could." Here Lord Derby, from his own point of view, may be fairly thought to have made a mistake. In these matters there is seldom a safe middle course. Unofficial diplomacy is as much a contradiction in terms as unofficial war, and it generally has the same issue. If it is right or prudent for a consul to act at all in a private matter, he should act officially. If it is not right or prudent, his personal interference may be even worse than his official interference. Mr Rivers Wilson went out to Cairo at the beginning of 1876, and made the startling discovery that the debt, including arrears of interest and floating debt, now amounted to 91 millions sterling! The burden of the fellahen was rolling up remorselessly. Lord Derby, despairing of effectual help, withdrew his unofficial countenance, and Mr Rivers Wilson was recalled. The bondholders had to take a new

departure, and Mr Goschen now came to their rescue. His firm, as bankers for the two first loans, had presented a formal protest at Cairo against the non-payment of the coupons. It was resolved to follow that up with a special mission to Egypt, of such a character as to impress the Khedive, whose good faith was not implicitly relied on. Mr Goschen agreed to go as the English commissioner, and his French colleague was M. Joubert. They adopted drastic measures. Finding that Ismael Sadyk Pasha, the Minister of Finance, was hostile to them, they had him tried on a charge of conspiracy against the Khedive, and sent off to the White Nile—the Siberia of Egypt. Ismail Pasha then surrendered at discretion, and subscribed to the commissioners' terms—European comptrollers of the revenue, European commissioners of the public debt, a special hypothecation of the dues of Port Alexandria, and an Anglo-French administration of the State railways,—a complete financial control of the country, in short.

This, it will be observed, was a private contract between the ex-Khedive and his foreign creditors. The British Consul-General at Cairo had assisted "unofficially" to carry it through, and, with Lord Derby's sanction, he afterwards gave the Comptrollers his "unofficial" support in their difficult task of enforcing it. But there was no political purpose or complexion whatever in the Dual Control as thus originally established. In all its aims and circumstances, it will be seen that it was a financial arrangement. The plain practical facts were that Ismail Pasha, the then virtually absolute ruler of Egypt, was bankrupt, and put himself under trust. Such was the exact situation created by the Goschen-Joubert com-

pact of 1876, out of which arose the original Dual Control. The causes of its failure, and of the political intervention thereby necessitated, three years later, are but too easily traced. The trust-estate was in a much worse state than had been suspected; and the bankrupt, not to put too fine a point on it, required very dexterous handling. The provision made for the service of the foreign debt was ample, but the surplus left for carrying on the government of the country was utterly insufficient. In the first year of the Control (1877) the total revenue was about 9½ millions sterling. Of that the bondholders got over 7 millions, partly as interest and partly as redemption of capital. The Turkish tribute and the interest on the Suez Canal shares, payable to the British Government, absorbed another million, leaving the last million and a few odd thousand pounds for the whole expenses of administration of 400,000 square miles of country, inhabited by 5½ millions of people.

Ismael Pasha, who had all the cuteness of impecuniosity, foresaw clearly enough how the Control would work, and how capital might be made out of it for himself. That it should be unpopular with the natives was inevitable, and a word or a hint from him could always intensify the feeling. The whole machinery of the Government, from the Council of Ministers to the sheik of the smallest village, was cleverly worked so as to bring odium on the foreign interlopers. Twice a-year, when the coupons had to be made up, a greedy army of tax-gatherers was set on to grind money out of the poor fellaheen. They were compelled to pay their taxes six months and sometimes twelve months in advance. If unable, their cattle were seized and driven to market,

to be sold to confederates of the tax-collectors. Forced sales had also to be made of growing crops, or money had to be borrowed from the village usurers at exorbitant interest, the speedy result of which was ruin to the borrower. Meanwhile Ismail Pasha rather enjoyed the rôle of "sovereign in sequestration." He had so far saved his enormous private estates, purchased to a large extent with public money, and a good deal of it the money of the bondholders. He had likewise reserved to himself perfect freedom of expenditure both public and private. So long as the coupons were met, and the sinking funds maintained, he was free to do as he pleased with the surplus revenue. Asserting this right, he refused resolutely to submit to any control over his expenditure. However much the Comptrollers may have pitied the sufferings of the fellaheen, they could do nothing to alleviate them. They could only receive the taxes as they were collected. They had no power to check abuses of collection, or to prevent the Khedive incurring new debt, or to force the Government to attempt any reform. Their position in the country was from first to last invidious and unfortunate. The exactions which their thankless office imposed on them were enough to make them hateful to the people; but when, in addition, they had to be the scapegoats of all the malpractices of native officials, the situation soon became intolerable. Their first attempt at a remedy, the introduction of Europeans into the civil service, brought the disease rapidly to a crisis. Foreign officials were imported far too freely, and, in the circumstances of the country, were extravagantly paid, furnishing another and fatal handle against the Control. The Commissioners and their staffs represented a cost to

the country of over £30,000 a-year. Within twelve months it was discovered that "the old leaven of useless and corrupt officials" would have to be weeded out. Two hundred natives were accordingly displaced, and about two hundred more Europeans brought in, raising the foreign salary list by £60,000 a-year.

This was one of the proximate causes of the anti-foreign agitation which, skilfully fostered by Arabi Pasha, developed into the national movement of 1882. It played effectually into the adroit hands of Ismail Pasha, and enabled him to pose before his people as their champion against foreign oppression. The time arrived when the Comptrollers had to put their foot down, and come to a clear understanding with the Khedive. In their capacity of trustees, they had to charge him, in the language of the Bankruptcy Court, with concealment of property. They also claimed supervision of his expenditure; and on both points he obstinately resisted them. He played for a high stake, and though he played boldly as well as cleverly, he lost.

Ismail's scheme was virtually to bring the administration of the country to a standstill, in order to force the Comptrollers to release their hold on the bondholders' money, and prepare the way for a proposal to reduce the interest on the debt. His private debts and the domestic debts of the State were being sued for daily in the international courts, and executions were being put into the Khedival palace itself. The Comptrollers' reply to his protests that the coupons could not be paid without ruining the country was, that he should render an account of the enormous private estates he still retained, and which had been largely acquired with public money. They insisted on his appointing a commission with full

power to investigate the financial position of the State both as regards expenditure and revenue. The Khedive stood out doggedly against interference with his expenditure, and an appeal had to be made to the controlling Powers, on the ground that public order was in grave danger—as undoubtedly it was. The Treasury chest had been seized by a foreign official under a judgment of the court for arrears of salary. The army, the civil service, and even the Khedive's domestic servants, had got no pay for months. And all the blame of the fearful misery which the country suffered was being laid by the Khedive and his creatures on the Comptrollers, whose anxiety was to devise a remedy for it. At length the Consul-General had to submit to the Foreign Office the alternative of crossing the shadowy line of "unofficial" assistance, and applying direct pressure to the Khedive, or of allowing a catastrophe to precipitate itself on Egypt. For once Lord Derby not only saw clearly, but made up his mind and struck home.

The Khedive was given to understand that there must be a thorough and independent inquiry into his expenditure. He yielded, and Mr Rivers Wilson returned to Cairo to preside over the Commission. Its proceedings were a series of hand-to-hand contests with the Khedive. The first resulted in the dismissal of Cherif Pasha, the most powerful bulwark of the old system. The next raged round the question of the Crown lands, which had been retained by the Khedive. This issued in a compromise—the Khedive surrendering about 288,000 acres, with a revenue of nearly £400,000 per annum, and being allowed to keep about half that quantity. The next and stiffest fight was over the limitation of the Khedive's absolute

power. The Commission insisted that he should submit himself to the condition of a constitutional monarch, with responsible ministers. Preparatory to that, he was required to surrender all other Crown property in the hands of himself and his family, and to accept a civil list. All this he had to yield, though much against the grain; and in August 1878 he signed a document—the Magna Charta of Egypt—affirming the doctrine of ministerial responsibility. This "Rescript," as it was called, of August 1878, was in effect a solemn engagement with the two Powers at whose instance it was adopted. It gave them a clear moral right to take the extreme measure which forced itself on them in the following year. Mr Rivers Wilson and the French Comptroller became members of the first Egyptian Cabinet, and in that capacity carried on the triangular duel with the Khedive, which was now coming to very close quarters. Ismail Pasha fought his losing battle skilfully to the bitter end. He was full of resource, and had a powerful weapon in his hand in the National movement, which was now assuming serious proportions. His final stroke was delivered through the Assembly of Notables, whom he instigated to all kinds of interference with the executive and even with the provincial administration. This culminated in a popular tumult, headed by dismissed officers of the army, and at one time threatening personal violence to Mr Rivers Wilson. In April 1879 the Khedive declared his sympathy with the mob by summarily dismissing his two European Ministers. The Powers, who could regard this in no other light than as a defiance, replied with the famous measure which ended in Ismail Pasha's deposition.

In June 1879 the new *régime*

began with Ismail Pasha's son Tewfik as Khedive. It is now necessary to observe carefully every step taken by the Powers, as they were no longer acting "unofficially," but directly and in their own names. The one political act chargeable on them as regards Ismail Pasha was their procuring his deposition. That was no doubt partly in the interest of the bondholders, but quite as much in the interests of the Egyptian people, for whom good or even endurable government was impossible while Ismail was intriguing and manœuvring to recover the arbitrary power which he had been forced nominally to resign. Up to the end of 1877 the issue had been solely between Ismail Pasha and his foreign creditors. In 1878, and onward to the deposition of Ismail Pasha, it was a question of public safety and order in Egypt: a question clearly affecting the Egyptians more than any one else. With the accession of Tewfik Pasha, however, an undeniably abnormal state of affairs begins. From that date a state of foreign intervention existed on the Nile. Egypt was placed under a moral protectorate by the European Powers, with England and France at their head. Any one candid enough to accept the fact that Ismail Pasha had by his extravagance and his general recklessness rendered himself an impossibility as ruler of Egypt, will not care to waste further words on the *modus operandi* of his fall. He threw himself on his fate, and there was an end of him.

The Egyptian question of to-day begins, therefore, with the advent of Tewfik Pasha. It was attended by three distinctive acts of foreign intervention. The first was the re-establishment of the European Control, this time with an avowedly political character, and not, as before, in an "unofficial" sense.

It is important to note here that the first British Comptroller was Sir Evelyn Baring, who had filled the same post on the old Control, and who has been the trusted adviser of the present Government ever since it had anything to do with Egypt. This unimpeachable Liberal, experienced financier, near relative of Lord Northbrook, and intimate friend of Mr Gladstone, was an integral part of the Egyptian "heritage of woe" taken over from the late Government. It may have been specially for him that Mr Gladstone intended the warm eulogy he bestowed on the Dual Control in his speech at Leeds in October 1881. Though the Premier had been eighteen months in office he was still playing the rôle of humanitarian statesman, and it suited him to assure the people of Leeds that "not only the finance of Egypt, which was in confusion, had been brought into order, but the peasantry had had great advantages introduced through the European interference into what was a system of serious and grievous oppression."

The second distinctive act of foreign intervention in 1879 was the appointment of a new Financial Commission. This, too, was avowedly political, and all the great Powers were represented on it save Russia. Its object was to complete the interrupted inquiry into the financial condition of the country, and to frame a new supervising authority on behalf of the bondholders. It will be observed that it satisfied Mr Gladstone's fundamental canon of foreign policy—the concert of Europe. The third and most important act of the Powers in the rehabilitation of Egypt was the Law of Liquidation framed by the above Commission. It was an act which for the first time demanded a substantial sacrifice from the bondholders,

and conferred a real boon on the long-suffering fellaheen. It reduced the interest on the Unified debt by one-third—namely, from 7 per cent to 4 per cent, and saved the Treasury over a million and a half sterling per annum. This is the one instance of foreign intervention on behalf of the unfortunate people who are the most innocent as well as the most helpless victims of these complications.

When Mr Gladstone came into office he had these three facts before him—the re-established Control, the Commission of Public Debt, and the Law of Liquidation. Two of them—the Commission of Public Debt and the Law of Liquidation—were international engagements, placed under the sanction of that highest of all moral authorities, the concert of Europe. Lord Salisbury could not have prevented them coming into existence, either with or without our participation. He would have been opposing a generous act to the Egyptian people had he done so. Mr Gladstone could never have thought for a moment of repudiating them. He would have been violating the concert of Europe, and inflicting a wanton wrong on Egypt, had he made the attempt. But there was one way in which he might very easily have marked his disapproval of the policy of his predecessors. If he had seen any reason for declining the “heritage of woe,” he might have withdrawn his friend and confidant, Sir Evelyn Baring, from the new Control. That institution was still in its infancy. It was hardly twelve months old, and the French Government would have been only too happy to carry it on alone. Can any one conceive of such an absurdity as that Mr Gladstone ever for a moment thought of withdrawing from the Control, and leaving Egypt to France? If he did not,

where was his “heritage of woe”?—in the Control, with his friend Sir Evelyn Baring at the head of it? in the Commission of Public Debt, constituted by five of the great Powers? or in the Law of Liquidation, which relieved the Egyptian people of a million and a half sterling per annum of liabilities which they could not meet?

Whatever he may discover now in his unfathomable conscience, the proof is abundant enough that Mr Gladstone accepted his heritage of woe in Egypt very calmly. So far as the published Blue-Books show, it caused him very little anxiety during his first eighteen months in office. With the exception of two sets of correspondence tabled by Lord Salisbury in the first session of 1880, and the report of the Law of Liquidation, also a legacy of his, there is nothing but a few consular reports to indicate what was going on in Egypt from the spring of 1880 to the autumn of 1881. So far as our Foreign Office is concerned, these eighteen months are a blank in the history of Egypt. The country does not seem to have existed, for certain statesmen, who were bending the whole strength of their intellects to the setting up of Land Courts in Ireland, which Mr Parnell and Mr Henry George will very probably knock down again within ten years. In these eighteen months that Mr Gladstone devoted to landlord-killing and general confiscation in Ireland, his Nemesis was sowing on the Nile the seeds of a frightful retribution. It is a baleful but clearly provable fact, that Mr Gladstone's heroic ecstasies of reform are invariably followed by some cruel disenchantment abroad, that costs the country tenfold, or even a hundredfold, the value of the parliamentary curries with which Radicals love to have their palates fired by him. In 1853 he ex-

pected the world to stand still until he had rendered the great service to humanity of reforming the income-tax. A little of the absorbing attention given to that high theme might have saved us from the Crimean war. In 1860 the gates of the millennium were to be unlocked by means of commercial treaties. But in 1861 we were within an ace of war with the United States; and in 1865, when Bismarck appeared on the scene, Lord Russell and Mr Gladstone ignobly escaped from a disastrous collision with him by leaving Denmark to do the fighting. In 1870, when the agrarian afflatus was strong on our domestic Isaiah, he had evidently not the slightest conception that there was such a thing looming in the near future as the German Empire.

One of the kindest acts Providence ever did to this country was having arranged that Lord Beaconsfield and not Mr Gladstone should be in power on the eve of the Russo-Turkish war. Mr Gladstone, if then in office, would very probably have been lashing up the enthusiasm of the Caucus on behalf of the county franchise, or against the House of Lords. At a critical moment some step might have been taken, without the knowledge of Parliament, or the faintest suspicion on the part of the country, which would have plunged all Europe into the fray. The excuse for it would have been—to use words which Mr Gladstone, when last in Mid-Lothian, actually applied to Egypt—“We have been compelled constantly to come to decisions without that full and adequate knowledge which alone can form a satisfactory basis for political action. We have not known as much as we desire to know of Egyptian affairs. The public out of doors naturally has known still less, and our opponents who profess to

know everything, have known nothing at all.” Who, indeed, was to learn anything from a Government which did not publish a single despatch relating to Egypt for almost two years, and which, on the brink of one of the worst because most humiliating and irreparable disasters in our history, confessed through its head that it was in a state of “helpless ignorance? Not yet six months ago Mr Gladstone, in addressing his constituents, thought so little of the Egyptian question as to honour it with only half a dozen sentences, sandwiched between his threats against the House of Lords and his wailings over obstruction in the House of Commons. The whole difficulty he brushed aside by setting it down to Lord Salisbury’s “meddlesome disposition,” for which, however, Lord Salisbury was rather to be pitied than blamed. Shades of Chatham! that anything calling itself statesmanship should so complacently worship the verbal rubbish of parliamentary logic-chopping, while the lives of brave men and the honour of a great nation are being trodden under foot by savages for want of a strong firm hand reached out to them in time! More wonderful, more intolerable still, that even half-a-dozen persons should be found in an intelligent community to prefer the fatal rhetoric which tickles their ears while an enemy is striking at their hearts, to the real statesmanship which wards off danger without prating about it!

Gordon sacrificed, the flower of our army lying in the jaws of death on the Upper Nile, fifteen or it may be twenty millions of money lost through being a few days too late, another twenty, or, for aught we know, fifty millions more to spend in rescuing the too late rescuers of Gordon—and what will there be to show for it when

the final balance is struck? Is Egypt a gainer by our blind, bewildered sacrifices of blood and treasure? Will she be one iota the better for the deaths of those near and dear to us, whose bones are whitening on the desert? No; Egypt too is a victim. She has sacrificed even more bitterly than ourselves, to the Moloch of sophisticated verbosity, which gives us words instead of deeds, which is always overflowing with fine sentiments but has never a policy. Egypt has her dead to mourn over, her ruined trade to deplore, her heavy burdens to bear, which eloquent words and fine sentiments can never lighten. Egypt, like Gordon and the British tax-payer, has been betrayed. As the crowning stroke of his diplomacy, Lord Granville has surrendered every concession on her behalf that he professed to fight for at the Conference, and to be still fighting for in his private negotiations with France. The French Ministry represented the bondholders, who wanted their pound of flesh. Lord Granville was to be the champion of the fellaheen, ground down with taxes, and looking to the special friend of humanity, Mr Gladstone, for help. He insisted that the bondholders should contribute to the sacrifices which had become necessary on all sides. At first they were to be called on for a remission of one-half per cent interest both on the Preference and the Unified debt — not an unreasonable reduction, considering the financial state of the country. Lord Granville at last year's Conference offered to the Powers tempting inducements to meet him even half-way on that point. He would have virtually surrendered our position in Egypt and the whole fruits of the campaign of 1882, if the Powers had only come to his relief and taken

on them a share of his responsibility. France stood out for the bondholders, and Earl Granville broke up the Conference rather than openly sacrifice the fellaheen.

Since then M. Ferry has learned a lesson from Prince Bismarck, and practised with brilliant effect his tactics on the "squeezable" champions of the oppressed at St. James's. As his difficulties increased, Earl Granville lowered his ultimatum a point or two. He would be content now with a half per cent reduction on the interest of the Unified debt only—fully half the total amount—and, at the same time, he would stand to all the original concessions on his own side—European control, the complete neutralisation of the Suez Canal, and the limitation of our stay in Egypt. These tempting baits were still dangled within reach of M. Ferry, though the *quid pro quo* from him was to be cut down by more than one-half. M. Ferry thought, however, that with a little more "squeezing" he might do still better, and he was right. He made a counter-proposal as to the interest on the Unified debt. Instead of reducing the 4 per cent to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for an indefinite time, he would agree to a tax of 5 per cent on the 4 per cent for two years. In other words, he offered Earl Granville one-twentieth instead of one-eighth, or, in actual money, £111,198 per annum instead of £280,000! This is on a par with Lord Derby's huckstering with the Australian colonies for £15,000, when they wanted to save New Guinea from Prince Bismarck. While Earl Granville was fighting with M. Ferry for £111,198, Lord Wolseley was spending fully as much per day in dragging our army over cataracts rather than lead them along a straight road. M. Ferry is naturally delighted at having pulled the bondholders through with a trump-

ery loss of about £100,000 a-year, out of a total of 4½ millions. As a finishing stroke of irony on the jelly-fish friend of the fellaheen, he stipulated that the 5 per cent tax on the coupons should be returnable when the Egyptian Treasury was in a position to do so! A minister like Lord Palmerston or Mr Canning would have been apt to reply to such a proposal that it was difficult to distinguish it from a gratuitous insult. Lord Granville swallowed it as the Curaçoa after a feast of leeks.

With this grand climax to our Egyptian benefactions, we may now make up the four years' account and see how it looks as a whole. As a standard of comparison, let us recall for a moment the final boon of the late Government to the fellaheen. Under the Law of Liquidation originated by Lord Salisbury, the annual charges on the public debt of Egypt were reduced by a million and a half sterling—the one solid and substantial measure of relief which the fellaheen owe to foreign intervention. Mr Gladstone, after ignoring their existence for eighteen months, had his attention rudely called to the fact by Arabi Pasha's first rising in September 1881, when the Khedive's palace was surrounded by a mob of mutinous soldiers, who had been "retrenched" by the new Control. That was the first shot fired by the National movement, but it had already formulated a distinct and comprehensive programme, which Mr Gladstone might have seen in the Consul-General's reports of the day, had he felt the slightest interest in the subject. But Mr Gladstone had evidently never been able to spare five minutes to it from his Irish Land Act, and his anti-obstruction rules. He was glad, no doubt, to leave it in the hands of his friend Gambetta, who showed that it is not always the

most ardent republican who is the best judge of republicanism in others. Gambetta proposed that the two Powers should send each an ironclad to Alexandria, ostensibly as a counter-demonstration against the Turkish mission to Cairo. Another pretext was found for it afterwards, but that was the original one. Our Consul-General at Cairo foresaw the dangerous effect this might have on the Egyptian people, then madly excited against the army of foreign officials which the new Controllers had let loose on them. He telegraphed to London that "the demonstration" (Mr. Gladstone's favorite recipe for all foreign troubles, a "naval demonstration") "implied danger to Alexandria, and was calculated to cause agitation and disturbance among the whole Arab population, and not *improbably might lead to a general revolution.*" But Gambetta, of course, knew better than a Consul-General. He intended that the "naval demonstration" should be followed up; and at the close of the year, when a new assembly which had been elected under the influence of Arabi Pasha was about to meet, he proposed that the two Powers should make it perfectly clear they would stand no nonsense. His plan was to address to Tewfik Pasha a joint note, intimating to him, and through him to the Nationalists, that the Powers were resolved to strengthen his position and repress disorder.

That was virtually, as Earl Granville could not fail to see, a declaration of war to the knife against the National movement. He boggled at it, but influence was brought to bear on him through the negotiations for the renewal of the French Commercial Treaty, which were then in a critical state. Mr Gladstone was not going to sacrifice such a sop for the Chambers of

Commerce to a sentimental scruple about Egypt. On the 6th January 1882, the Dual Note was despatched to Cairo, and the "heritage of woe" began to bear its appropriate fruit. But let Mr Gladstone's countrymen observe where it came from, and how. The testator was not Lord Beaconsfield or Lord Salisbury. It was M. Gambetta, and, strangely enough, it was one of the last acts of his short-lived Administration. He put Mr Gladstone on the fatal Avernian slope, which landed us in the bombardment of Alexandria, the war of 1882, the Suakim campaign of 1884, the Nile expedition, the fall of Khartoum, and the unknown fate of Gordon. These events followed in logical and irresistible sequence from the Dual Note of January 1882. Their development cannot be better described than in words which will be familiar to every elector of Mid-Lothian, Mr Gladstone having used them there only a few months ago. "There is not a step we have taken which has not been the rigid, the inexorable consequence, one linked to the other by chains which cannot be broken; which has not been the absolute and necessary consequence of that—I do not say guilty, because it was well intended, but—most unhappy and unfortunate proceeding."

Such is the noble array, the ascending series, of our benefactions to a down-trodden and oppressed people. By the bombardment of Alexandria, an outrage which no other European Power would join us in, and which no new rule of international law has yet been invented to justify, we inflicted on Egypt a money loss of over four millions sterling, in the shape of indemnities. By way of penance we have since gone all round Europe, hat in hand, asking the great Powers to join us in rais-

ing a loan to pay for the wanton destruction committed on an open commercial port by British ironclads. The bombardment of Alexandria was certainly the most expensive act of buccaneering in the history of the world, and the poor fellaheen have to pay for it. Item second, we smashed up Arabi Pasha at Tel-el-Kebir at a cost to ourselves of an extra three-halfpence on the income-tax, and to the fellaheen of at least two millions sterling. Item third, we saddled Egypt with an army of occupation, which we charge for at the rate of £300,000 a-year, all to be extracted as we best can from the fellaheen. Item fourth, we have, since 1880, saddled Egypt with a civilian army of foreign officials, more costly even than our troops. In March 1882, three months before the riots in Alexandria, the number of foreigners in the Egyptian service was 1325, and their salaries aggregated £375,000 a-year. Sir Evelyn Baring, in the financial report prepared for the Conference last year, acknowledged as among the most crying abuses of the country, that it was being governed to death by functionaries native and foreign. In 1880, the whole number of public employees, he said, was 14,254; and in 1883, it had increased to 17,490, or nearly 20 per cent in three years. There had been in the interval a great crowd of old officials pensioned off, and the pension-list had grown from £208,000 to £325,000. Item fifth, we completely demoralised the finances of the country, raising the expenditure extravagantly while the main branches of revenue were falling off. The Egyptian Budget of 1884, submitted to the Conference, showed an increase of expenditure, as compared with 1880, of £211,000, which Sir Evelyn Baring thought might be

reduced to £146,000. This was without providing for the army of occupation—another £300,000; but taking credit for £170,000, saved in consequence on the native army and navy. Our boasted financiers have achieved bigger deficits than even Ismail Pasha used to do in his stock-jobbing carnival. They began the year 1882 with Treasury balances of various kinds exceeding £400,000. They ended the year with a debtor balance of £463,000. The actual deficit, if all its details could be got together, would not fall much short of a million sterling. In 1883 they were more than a million and a quarter to the bad; and last year they anticipated a deficit of nearly half a million. The accumulated deficits of the three years acknowledged by Sir Evelyn Baring are nearly two and three-quarter millions. This, added to the indemnities, which exceed four millions, makes nearly seven millions sterling piled on to the Egyptian debt as the result of three years of British administration. With commendable foresight Earl Granville proposes to make the deficiency loan nine millions, there being reason to fear that an equilibrium of receipts and expenditure has not yet been arrived at. It is a wonderful feat in finance, a truly heroic lesson for the fellaheen in self-government. And if they do not relish it, they may console themselves with the thought that our generous assistance in running them into debt another nine millions will, before we see the end of it, cost us perhaps fifty millions. The burden of the tragedy may not be so unequally divided, after all—nine millions to Egypt and fifty millions to us. But it is costly statesmanship. If Mr Gladstone had bestowed half the attention on the Dual Note of January 1882 that he was then giving to

obstruction, he would have saved his own country and Egypt money enough to buy every farm in Ireland under five acres, and make a clean present of it to the tenant. While he was gagging the House of Commons, Egypt was hurrying to her ruin, bombarded by his “friendly” ironclads, invaded by his “friendly” armies, reduced to bankruptcy by his “friendly” Controllers, and abandoned at last to the tender mercies of “friendly” bondholders.

Alas! bad as it is, that is not the bitterest drop in this cup of national sorrow and humiliation. It is only when we stand in imagination, with uncovered heads and grief-stricken hearts, beside the unknown grave of Gordon, that we realise the full evil of our “meddling and muddling” on the Nile. General Gordon, the oriflamme of our Christian chivalry, dead!—assassinated by the dagger of some cowardly traitor!—sacrificed on the foul altar of stock-jobbery and cool-blooded statecraft! It is more than this country will endure. Ministerial apologists may palliate the disgrace as they may, and the Caucus may rally all its soulless forces to shield the Government from just punishment, but their hour of doom has struck. The civilised world has passed sentence on them without a single dissenting voice, and posterity will indorse the verdict through all the ages that are to come. Their own official correspondence, mutilated and carefully edited as it is, fixes on them the responsibility of Gordon’s fate. Twelve months ago they made an appeal to him, which practically asked him for ninety-nine in a hundred chances of his life. They left him for himself but one poor chance in a hundred; and did they, as men of honour, as Englishmen, as Christians, do all that in them lay

to guard that one chance? No; they did not. If they think they did, let them explain Earl Granville's telegrams to Sir Evelyn Baring, refusing to adopt any of Gordon's proposals for the settlement of the Soudan, and yet begging him to remain a little longer with his head in the lion's mouth.

This we know is a cruel reproach to make to an English Minister, but it is matter of history. The Blue-book, 'Egypt, No. 12, 1884,' speaks for itself; and it tells a tale which, when heard, as it must be, in Parliament, will cause the ears of General Gordon's countrymen to tingle with indignation. Gordon went to Khartoum on a very special mission; and, as he believed, with extraordinary powers adequate to the occasion. The Government that appointed him had no right to be startled at any proposal he might make for effecting his task. If it was too wild a proposal for them to adopt promptly and energetically, their duty was to recall him at once, seeing they had no policy of their own to offer him instead of Gordon, after examining the situation, recommended the appointment of Zebehr Pasha as Governor of the Soudan. Colonel Stewart indorsed this recommendation; and Sir Evelyn Baring, in forwarding it to the Government, expressed his own opinion that Zebehr Pasha "was the only possible man." This was telegraphed from Cairo to London on the 19th February 1884. On the 22d February Earl Granville telegraphed back: "Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the gravest objections exist to the appointment by their authority of a successor to General Gordon." Though he had that very day received intelligence of the fall of Tokar and the massacre of the garrison, he did not think "the necessity had yet arisen of going

beyond the suggestions contained in General Gordon's memorandum of the 22d ult., by making a special provision for the government of the country." Gordon's reply was characteristically short and decided. On the 26th February he telegraphed: "That settles the question for me. I cannot suggest any other." But Sir Evelyn Baring appears to have pressed the proposal, and to have also suggested, as an alternative, the despatch of troops to Berber. On the 11th March Earl Granville reiterated his refusal, adding that neither were the Government prepared to send troops to Berber; but "they would be quite prepared to extend General Gordon's appointment for any reasonable time which may be necessary to enable him to carry out the objects of his mission."

Magnanimous Cabinet! It would allow Gordon to do nothing, and it would do nothing for him, but "it was quite prepared to extend his appointment"! In another despatch (No. 185, March 1, 1884), Earl Granville expressed his real wish in plainer words: "Her Majesty's Government desire further information as to the urgency of any immediate appointment of a successor to General Gordon, *who, they trust, will remain for some time longer at Khartoum.*" From a House of Commons point of view, Gordon at Khartoum was invaluable. He was a ready answer to all inconvenient questions, and the "Christian hero" was an irresistible stalking-horse in debate. Therefore Gordon was asked to keep his head in the lion's mouth! Let it be engraven over him—"Who, they trust, will remain for some time longer at Khartoum." Not only thrust into the lion's den, but actually hand-tied and begged to remain there to meet his death!

PLAIN FRANCES MOWBRAY.

CHAPTER III.

LADY FRANCES only got back from the garden on the Guidecca just in time for dinner. The Colonel had already arrived, and had brought her a great bunch of poppies and wild oats as an *amende* for his desertion. He was in high spirits, laughing over the proceedings of the afternoon, which, it seemed, had been fruitful of amusing incident, though, excepting that some one in making tea had spilt hot water over somebody else's feet, his sister was unable to make out any one in particular. She herself was even more silent than usual that evening, her thoughts being still in the garden by the Redentore, and with her old friend there. Fortunately Madame Facchino had not failed duly to put in an appearance, and was as ready as usual to supply every possible social requirement, filling up all awkward pauses with her indomitable and invaluable volubility.

There was another visitor, a distant cousin of the Mowbrays, the wife of a Lincolnshire clergyman, who was staying at a *pension*, and who had been asked that evening to dinner from a feeling of family obligation. This lady had only lately arrived in Venice, and had a great many complaints to make—so many, that after dinner Lady Frances found it as much as she could do to listen, and endeavour, as far as she could, to respond to them. "Did it generally rain as much as it had done during the last week? she wished to know. She had been out in a boat all yesterday, and had twice had to come and change her stockings, the water

having come in through the back of the hood. Surely dear Frances did not find a gondola a convenient equipage in bad weather? And was it really necessary to pay those dreadful old men with crooks, who stood upon the steps, and pretended to help one out? One of them had insisted upon giving her his hands yesterday, though she had tried hard to avoid touching them,—such dreadfully dirty hands—Frances couldn't imagine how dirty—quite disgusting; and ear-rings, too—actually ear-rings—in his ears! Surely it could not be right to encourage such mendacity? Her husband had made such very strict rules about it in their parish, the beggars had been very troublesome there at first, but now, she was thankful to say, there were none—not *one*. It couldn't be right to encourage in other countries what you wouldn't in your own, could it—not logically? Of course, their being Roman Catholics, poor creatures, made a difference; but unless *some one* set an example, how were they ever to improve? That was what she wanted to know. Didn't dear Frances quite agree with her?

While these complaints were being poured into the sister's ears at one end of the room, Madame Facchino was entertaining the brother by singing to him at the other. It was a large room—so large that much of the sound and most of the sense was lost in the transit across it. The music began at the piano-forte, but after a while Madame Facchino duly produced her mandolin, and the two adjourned to the balcony, which the warmth of the

evening rendered tempting, and whence the sounds which penetrated to the listeners were, of course, yet more faint and intermittent. The stream of Mrs Mowbray's complaint, beginning after a time to run thin, Lady Frances proposed to follow them, and accordingly moved across the room for that purpose.

The balcony, like many in Venice, was partly covered in on one side, and a large red sofa had been placed at this end. It was rather dark, and the entrance to it narrow, so that the approach of the two ladies was at first unperceived by those without. The Colonel was luxuriously established nearly at full length upon the sofa, a cigarette between his lips, his magnificent auburn beard, barely touched with grey, spread out in wide luxuriance over his shirt front, his face beaming with good-humour and amusement. Madame Facchino, perched upon the cushioned ledge of the balustrade, with a yellow scarf, twisted as a precautionary measure around her tousled locks, was singing a French song with a marvellous rattle and *roulade* of the words over her tongue, now and then bringing down her hands—thumbs, fingers, backs, fronts, it seemed indifferent which—and producing a wild not always perfectly harmonious twang out of the instrument, her white teeth gleaming, her small green eyes twinkling in emphatic appreciation of her own strains. There was another cigarette, also alight, laid in suggestive proximity to her left elbow.

Mrs John Mowbray stopped short upon the threshold and gazed at the scene before her, and then at her hostess with open-eyed dismay. She had heard of such doings before, her looks seemed to say, and had even read of them in books, but never, never, had she expected

to have them brought under her own eyes! Her French was not of sufficiently modernised a type for her to follow the words of the song, fortunately perhaps; but the general import and drift was sufficiently evident, and she turned away, speechless, appalled.

"Upon Sunday, too! Oh, I fear, I fear that they have forgotten what the day is, Frances!" she said in a tone of shocked and awed hostility.

Lady Frances blushed as if she too had been accused of Sabbath-breaking. To tell the truth, she had partly forgotten herself what the day was, in spite of having been to church, which some people think is chiefly useful as a remembrance of that fact. As to the singing of secular songs, and the smoking of many cigarettes, those were Venetian institutions, which, puritanically inclined as she was herself, she had long learnt to look upon as so much a matter of course, Sundays or week-days, as the eating of one's dinner. She did, after a while, summon her brother, and set him to explain to Mrs Mowbray, how she was to get to Trieste, and what particularly she was to see when she got there; but that matter settled, she allowed him to slip away again to his balcony, his cigarette, and his song. She had been used to act as breakwater between him and the bores of life for so long that it seemed only natural that she should continue to do so to the end of the chapter.

A few days later she called upon Mrs Markham at her hotel, according to her promise; but that lady was out, so that the visit only resulted in the leaving of cards. About a week after, however, the visit was returned, and on this occasion the two ladies met.

Lady Frances was sitting in her

usual seat between the fireplace and the window, which commanded a view of the entire apartment from its entrance, and had therefore full time to admire her stately visitor as she advanced between the widely scattered pieces of furniture, which had the air of forthwith converting themselves into so many specially devised back grounds as the way of fortunate beauty is. She was a very tall woman, whose figure had gained in majesty what it had perhaps lost in its first youthful grace. She was, as has been said, wonderfully, immaculately blond, the features rather too small perhaps for the present size of the face, being almost classically perfect, the nose and chin especially so. The eyes were less striking, but the shape of the brows and of the eyelids were modelled as if with the hand of a sculptor. The simile of an unusually large white swan recurred again to Lady Frances's mind, and it was with something of the air of that stateliest of birds that the *ci-devant* Princess Matrena Vladimirovitch advanced towards her hostess, who got up to receive her, but stood still, reddening, *gauche*,—as shy as though she were still sixteen years of age, a prey to all that nervous discomfiture which, here at least in her own drawing-room, might surely have been spared. It was, partly perhaps, the contrast—the sense of the other's triumphant beauty, her self-conscious grace—which accelerated her discomfiture. She knew, of course, that it was utterly contemptible to think about it,—what, at fifty-two, had a woman got to do with ugliness or beauty? What mattered it whether she was comely as Juno, or hideous as Hecate? who cared, who knew, who troubled themselves? It was all very well to scold herself, but the sensation

remained. When a particular fact has formed the central point of one's consciousness for over forty years, it is not so easy to shake it off again at will!

The visit did not last long, nor was it signalised by any marked cordiality on either side. Lady Frances's shyness took from moment to moment an additional coating of reserve, while the beautiful visitor's manners, if irreproachable, were not encouraging. She did not, it is true, condescend to Lady Frances, or look pityingly at her clothes, or play off any petty airs; but she took little pains to conceal that she was acquitting herself of a duty,—one of those social obligations which fall to the lot of even the most fortunately circumstanced of women, lifting her white eyelids from time to time to utter some perfunctory observation, and dropping them again with an air of weariness before she had received the answers. Just as she was getting up to go, the Colonel appeared upon the scene, looking rather excited, and explaining that he had been on his way down the Canal when he had caught sight of her gondola at their door, and had made all haste in to have the honour of receiving her. In spite of this flattering assurance, Mrs Markham was not to be persuaded to delay her departure; and all the Colonel gained by his assiduity was the satisfaction of being able to escort her down the staircase, which he did with all the air of some particularly obsequious courtier in attendance upon his liege lady.

Lady Frances remained upon the top of the landing, looking after them from the window which commanded the stairs. She felt puzzled, irritated, uncomfortable. Certainly, if Mrs Markham were

a coquette, she was the stateliest of coquettes—the most composed, the least unbending. She hoped that her brother might have come back, if only to expatiate upon her perfections; but this he did not do, springing, instead, into his own gondola, which was waiting for him at the steps, and which bore him away in the direction of the Piazzetta. After this interchange of civilities, she saw nothing more of the English-named Russian for several weeks, though indirectly she heard a good deal, as indeed did all Venice. The whole town took a lively interest in the proceedings of the magnificent widow, about whose fortune, character, intentions, a thousand conflicting rumors were industriously flying.

Passing up and down the Grand Canal, Lady Frances used sometimes to see her of an afternoon holding a sort of semi-royal state upon the terrace of her hotel, surrounded by a train of devotees, amongst whom the Colonel's stalwart proportions towered conspicuously. The sight always gave her a feeling of discomfort, almost of humiliation, she hardly knew why. It was not the sense of neglect, for that was quite a separate feeling. It was as though he were doing something unbecoming,—putting himself into a category from which he ought, according to her own feeling, to be exempt.

She saw little of him in these days, for he was brimful of engagements; Venetian custom, which entails the sitting up, even upon the smallest occasions, until two or three in the morning, obliging the votaries of its society to make up some portion of their forfeited rest upon the following day. She felt a little hurt, a little neglected; but after all, what right had she, she asked herself,

to feel so? ought she not rather to wonder that something of the same kind had not happened long, long before? She went a great deal to the garden on the Guidecca, and sat hours at a time with her old friend, or wandered about under the vine-trellises, looking between the sun-streaked leaves at the satiny breadths of the lagoon, so gleaming, so sensitive, so alive to every breath of the skies; at the fragmentary islands, the black clumps of piles, the infinite play and fluctuation seen across the more solid foreground of greenery.

The Princess never again alluded, even remotely, to the subject of her testamentary dispositions; and once when Lady Frances would herself have reopened the matter, she made such emphatic demonstrations of her intention then and there to have another attack of hysteria, that the latter was forced to forbear, registering, however, a mute determination of recurring to it again at a more convenient season.

One afternoon about the middle of May, she chanced to return to the house just as her brother was also arriving in his gondola, and the two waited for one another upon the steps, and went up-stairs together. The Colonel was in high spirits, looking remarkably handsome—perfectly unconscious, evidently, of any imaginable cause for offence upon either side. He wanted Frances, he said, to do him a favour. They were planning an expedition next day to one of the islands in the lagoon. Would she come too? He particularly, *most* particularly, wanted her to do so; in fact, she must not refuse. Maitland Majoribanks was coming, and so was young Fennel and his pretty sister, and one or two other fellows. Mrs Markham had agreed to be of the party, and

he knew she would take it as a compliment if Frances would come too.

"She says she has seen nothing at all of you, Fan," he added, with the *naïveté* with which a man will sometimes repeat the speech of one woman to another, "We'll want another lady, I suppose, to balance the party," he went on, "so what do you say to our asking Madame Facchino? She is always a lively little grig, and we'll make her bring her guitar, or mandolin, or whatever she calls that instrument of hers. But you're the person we want—that everything depends upon. So don't say no. I haven't had a favour of you for ever so long, have I, old lady?"

Lady Frances was pleased and not a little touched. Whatever might be the reason of this sudden urgency, the fact that her brother wanted her counted for so much—so very, very much. It had seemed to her lately as if he had certainly not wanted her; as if that joint life and companionship which had been begun in such hope, with such success, was proving, on one side at any rate, an encumbrance, a thing which, whether he married or did not marry, it might be wisest to give up, rather than to let it drag on, a weariness to him, a pain, and a perpetual source of unreasonable expectation to herself. Now, however, it would appear at last that he *did* want her. Had he suggested a pleasure-trip to Hades, she would hardly have declined!

"Of course, Hal, dear, I will go since you wish it," she said, her voice trembling with the pent-up feelings of weeks. "I will tell Gustave, too, to get ready some cold chicken and salad, and whatever else is wanted, so that it will not be necessary for any one else to order anything," she added, hurry-

ing away with all the nervousness of a shy woman from the subject nearest to her heart, and which she felt to be perilous to her composure. She did recur to it again, however, for a moment before they parted.

"It will be spending a day together again, won't it, Hal?" she said, laying her hand timidly upon his sleeve, as he was moving towards the door. "We've not seen much of one another somehow lately, dear, have we?"

The Colonel turned round, touched instantly in his turn, and kissed her affectionately upon the cheek.

"No, I know I've been neglecting you most abominably lately, Fan!" he said, penitently. "And you're a trump; you never reproach a fellow. Only I couldn't help it, dear; I really could not. I—I—I've been most tremendously occupied lately, somehow—about a thousand things, you know." He hesitated, moved a vase which was standing in somewhat perilous proximity to the edge of a table; divided his beard into two carefully equalised masses with his fingers, and then suddenly swept it all together again.

"Perhaps I'll have a bit of news to tell you to-morrow evening, Fan," he added, hurriedly; and having so said, bolted rapidly down the steps, and into the gondola which was waiting for him as usual at the steps.

Lady Frances went on into the sitting-room to put some flowers which she had brought with her from the garden on the *Guidicca* into water. She smiled to herself once or twice as she did so, sadly enough, but she was no longer under the influence of that melting mood which she had experienced a few minutes sooner. On the contrary, she was conscious of a sensation at the bottom of her mind

which would or might have been a satiric one, but that it was checked and counteracted by others.

Did Hal really, *could* he really imagine that it would be a pleasure to her to hear this wonderful piece of news of his? Did he suppose that the mere proverbial feminine delight in a marriage would outweigh the serious, the inevitable sorrow which such a marriage would entail upon herself—the dead blank face which the future must henceforth wear to her? or had the mere fact of his own satisfaction blinded him to the very possibility of any one else regarding the matter from any other point of view?

If there was one human being in the whole world who knew her well, knew her to the bottom of her heart, she would have said it was her brother Hal. Oddly enough she had much more confidence in his knowing her than in she herself knowing him. This was not in the least that she had any doubt at all as to their relative standing, morally and intellectually. She never even dreamt of saying to herself that he was her superior. It would not have been true, and she liked the truth. She was the stronger, the clearer, the harder-willed, the broader-hearted, the larger-headed. Of this there was no question—never had been any. She was his superior in all or almost all that most becomes a man, just as surely and as certainly as he was her superior in almost all that most becomes a woman. Yet none the less she had more confidence in his knowing her than in her knowing him, really, thoroughly to the bottom of the last tissue. It was hardly conceivable that she could have any surprises for Hal; whereas it was quite conceivable to her that he might yet have a good

many surprises in store for her. Had he not, in fact, considerably astonished her within the last few weeks? Why, if he had made up his mind to marry, should he not have told her so? Why should he not have taken her into his confidence and appealed to her sympathy? Had he ever known it to fail him, to refuse to answer to the call? Surely she might honestly lay her hand upon her heart and answer Never. Whether she did or did not think this magnificent Russian—spoilt, vain, surfeited with admiration—exactly the wife of all others to make him happy—he who had also always been more or less spoilt himself—that was a detail, a matter for after consideration; of her full, free, perfect sympathy in whatever concerned or interested him, he ought not, surely, to have had a moment's doubt. If he had, then her whole life must have been a series of self-deception and delusion; perhaps—who knows?—it was, she said to herself.

Poor woman, she was morbid—she told herself so. She also, she admitted to herself, had been spoilt, if not in one way, at least in another. Her father had spoilt her—set her upon a false pedestal, one on which it was not natural, not reasonable, to expect that she should remain. An ugly, ill-mannered, not even particularly amiable woman! She ought to know her place better—she ought to know how little importance she could by any possibility be to any one! False positions were always cruel ones, and they that had loved her most had therefore, in the end, been the most cruel to her. Well, there was at least no fear that her new sister-in-law, if she ever did become her sister-in-law, would ever be cruel in *this* respect! She would have no illu-

sions ; no kindly delusions, born of old days and become a sort of family tradition, would ever blind her to the true standing of her husband's sister. She would see the thing in its natural light, and would take care to put her in her proper place ! Poor Lady Frances ! Her heart, too large for its present setting, stunted of all fresher outgrowths, driven perforce into one channel, and threatened with assault there, was fast becoming her bane. She was growing morose, bitter, wellnigh misanthropical, and all from pure sisterly love !

The party to the islands met at the Piazzetta, where its straggling ingredients were gradually got together and eventually packed into a couple of gondolas. Their destination, after a good deal of discussion, had been finally fixed for San Francesco in Deserto, where, should the day prove unfavourable, they could lunch at the monastery. The morning had been lovely, but the clouds began to gather before they were well out of Venice, and by the time they were nearing Murano the world of domes and campaniles behind were set in pale relief against a steel-grey background of cloud, darker, denser, more smoke-like masses rolling in from the west, and gathering recruits by the way, until they filled the entire hollow of the sky, down to the furthest most ghostly and worn-away ridge of the Euganeans.

A sail had been hoisted in one gondola, and the two boats were therefore fastened together in order that both might have the benefit of it. The amount of progress, however, was ridiculously small. Slowly they drifted past the point of Murano, whose brown roofs and chimneys seemed to prolong themselves indefinitely. The two awnings were a serious impediment to progress, and now that the sun

had gone in, were merely useless encumbrances, their curtains flapping a foolish rhythm against the poles, as the boats swayed from side to side. Lady Frances and Mrs Markham occupied the places of dignity in one gondola, Madame Facchino and the pretty Miss Fennel in the other. There was thus an ugly and a pretty woman in each boat : the men, too, were evenly distributed—three to each. The liquid waste around, fretted with myriads of black points, large and small, flecked, too, with flower-like sails—a yellow one, a crimson one, a brown with tawny points, a white one glowing steadily upwards into roseate, like an angel's wing ; the mountains, which began to show stray peaks above their shroud ; the infinite suggestions of the scene ; the stillness, the small bubbling conversational noises of the water, the leisurely flap-flap-flop of the sails, the picturesque attitudes of the boatmen as they lay about or stretched an indolent hand to adjust a rope,—all the elements of enjoyment, of intelligent satisfaction, were surely there ; yet none of the party seemed to be very industriously employed in enjoying themselves. Mrs Markham was nearly absolutely silent, contenting herself with an occasional half-murmured observation to the man nearest to her, with leaning one elbow upon the arm-rests, and looking between her finely chiselled eyelids across the waste of waters. Her rôle was certainly not to be amusing, and no one apparently ever thought of requiring her to be so. Even the Colonel—a social sheet-anchor generally to his friends—was not in his usual spirits. Although in the right boat, he had, unfortunately, been placed, probably from a mistaken regard to his years, in one of the two armed chairs at the side of the

gondola, which, if several degrees less uncomfortable than the other benches, were also, in this case, naturally several degrees further from the prevailing divinity. It was a relief to every one, when somebody suggested that Madame Facchino should sing one of her amusing French songs, which that obliging little person at once proceeded to do,—the shrill little voice, so brimful or *chic*, so absolutely devoid of charm, pealing like some small metal alarm across the dreamy stillness, where an occasional fisherman, knee-deep in the shallows, lifted his head in mild astonishment to see from whence the unaccountable sound proceeded.

After a great deal of futile tacking, the useless sail was at last dropped, and the men took to their oars, but the tide was very low, and it was therefore necessary to make the entire circuit of the piles set to mark the deeper channels, and which took them in a long succession of snake-like divagations, the advanced boat being often full broadside to the island while the other was still pointed towards it. It got colder and colder too, the clouds which had hung about all day condensing more and more, and threatening both wind and rain.

They arrived at last in the midst of a regular *burasque*, which now came down in earnest. The ladies were hurried up the narrow path to the monastery, between two rows of acacia-bushes, swept like plumes of cock's feathers, and bent nearly double by the gale. A brown-frocked brother came hospitably to the door to meet them, and led them through the cloister into a little bare room where there was a deal table and half-a-dozen of chairs, and where he hastened to shut the window lest the ladies should

suffer from the draught. It was much more like arriving at some mountain hospice, wearied and battered with the toils and dangers of a mountain-pass, than after a couple of hours' sail across the placid lagunes in the middle of a Venetian May. The little sanctuary was swept from end to end with wild gusts of wind, which sent the leaves of the acacias huddling into the corners of the cloister, and collecting in a small green drift round the foot of the tall black crosses. One of the gondoliers carrying the provisions from the boat had his hat blown into the sea. Every one looked more or less cold, out of temper, buffeted; Madame Facchino least so, her indomitable ugliness defying the utmost rigour of the elements to injure its perennial bloom. With a cigarette in her mouth, she sat on the low wall outside the cloisters—her hat on one side, her yellow shawl around her neck, her white teeth and green eyes gleaming—the very picture of good-humour and *insouciance*. Mrs Markham meanwhile retired into the interior of the apartment allotted to them. If she looked like a swan now, it was certainly like a swan which had been roughly assailed by the tempest. Her beautiful hair was disarranged, her dress crumpled, that repose which was so large an ingredient in her charm seriously invaded; there was no doubt at all, too, that, to put it plainly, she was extremely cross.

Happily luncheon produced its usual ameliorating influences; and after luncheon, the storm being past, and the sun having reappeared, most of the party started to explore the island, the Colonel and Mrs Markham leading the way at some little distance in advance of the rest.

Lady Frances was not of the number. The wind was still cold, and she preferred, therefore, to retreat into the little church. There was not much to see there ; so having gazed for some minutes into a glazed cell containing a figure held to represent St Francis himself at his devotions, she seated herself upon one of the wooden forms close to a window in the little chancel. As usual, she felt a little sad, a little forlorn, a little out of heart with herself and her world. Why, she again asked herself, had Hal urged her so imperatively to come with them to-day, seeing that now that she was here he plainly wanted her as little as did any of these others ?

Presently, prompted by an impulse, she did not quite know what, she mounted upon one of the wooden forms, which brought her head to a level with the small-paned window looking out across the wind-tossed acacias to the church-towers of Murano, and beyond these again to the wild panorama of mountains, snow-capped and cloud-flecked. She had been looking out a couple of minutes, and was about to descend again with a smile at her own attitude, which in truth, was a slightly ridiculous one, when, rather to her surprise, she saw her brother coming back towards her along a little track which led through the grass back to the broader pathway leading to the landing-place. Her hand was lifted to attract his attention, but was suddenly arrested by the expression of his face, which betokened surprise, anger, astonishment, hurt feeling, wounded susceptibilities—the look of a man who has been assailed in his tenderest point, and who believes that no eye sees him—such a look as she had certainly never seen on his care-defying lineaments before.

He passed rapidly on between the swaying acacias—so rapidly, that almost before she had got over her astonishment at the unlooked-for revelation, he was out of sight, hidden by the corner of the church, which here flung out a great projecting buttress of masonry. Lady Frances sprang to the ground, her whole heart rushing to him in his trouble. She hastened to the door, thence to the landing-place, thinking to overtake him. He was not there, however, but had taken, one of the gondoliers said, a path to the right leading along the ramparts. She followed, but failed to see anything of him. It was not long, however, before she fell in with the rest of the party, who had made the *giro* of the island, and were coming along in rather scattered order, the beautiful Russian last, attended by a cavalier, to whom she was paying that listless, half-contemptuous attention which she was accustomed to mete out to her devotees.

Madame Facchino advanced to meet her in a state of considerable excitement. She had promised, she said to be at the Bavarian consulate at five o'clock precisely that afternoon, and had only just discovered that it was past four now. As they had taken two hours to come here, it was obviously impossible for her to arrive if she remained with the party ; her only chance, therefore, was to catch the steamer at Burano: would dear Lady Frances, who was always so kind, allow her to be deposited there ? she inquired, clasping her hands with dramatic earnestness. Lady Frances was quite willing to do so, wondering however, rather, that nothing had been heard of this important engagement till then. She did not like to inquire whether anything

had been seen of her brother. There was an air about the party which put her sisterly pride upon its mettle, and forbade her to utter a word.

They returned to the landing-place, and had already taken their places in the gondolas when the Colonel appeared. He had been, it seemed, to inspect the monastery. What had they all been thinking of, he wanted to know, not to do so? The ladies, it is true, would only have been allowed to go as far as the cloisters, but the men were free to go over it all, and it was well worth seeing, really uncommonly worth seeing; he didn't know when he had spent a pleasanter half-hour. The monks, too, were capital fellows—he should not mind spending a month with them himself in the least. When he heard of Madame Facchino's intention of returning by the steamer, he at once volunteered to accompany her. He, too, had an appointment, it seemed, at Venice; and going back by the gondola, delightful as it was, really took up such a deuced amount of time. Accordingly the two were left upon the shore at Burano, and the gondolas, with

their diminished load, proceeded on their homeward way.

It was not a particularly cheerful home-coming, less so if anything than the outgoing had been. There was no attempt made this time to sail, and the gondolas were not therefore linked together, but followed one another at a little distance, with all the regularity, and not a little of the solemnity, of a pair of mourning-coaches. Lady Frances was in the first one, Mrs Markham in the second; had both been together, it is possible that some more interesting topic might have been mooted in the other; as it was, every one seemed tongue-tied, listless, "dull as the fat weed," which swung its slimy tresses around every projecting point of land, or floated, a mass of brown or yellow putrescence, towards the sea. When, hours as it seemed after they had started, the familiar line of roofs and campanile rose greyly above the face of the lagune, had the party formed some portion of the great Dandola fleet, returning after its famous but toilsome conquest of the Turks, it could hardly have been hailed by them with a much warmer measure of satisfaction.

CHAPTER IV.

What precisely *had* taken place at San Francesco in Deserto? That was what Lady Frances desired, but apparently was not destined, to learn. So far from becoming more approachable, the Colonel, in the days that immediately followed their expedition to that shrine, was less visible, less companionable than ever. It seemed to her as if he had registered a vow never to be in the house; or if for a short while they were together, the servants or some one else happened to be always present to hinder them

from being *tete-à-tete*—they who hitherto had been almost always *tete-à-tete*. That this attitude of his was a real and a very great grief to her, there was no possibility of concealing from herself. Her brother's friendship counted for so much, so very, very much in her life. Take it away and what remained to her? She had no other intimate friendship, not even in her own family. Her father and Hal—they had always been the two—her two,—and now there was only one of them left.

It is true that there are subjects which a man may fairly decline to discuss even with the tenderest and most devoted of sisters; rebuffs which smart, hurting alike to the pride and the temper. Still she had been trusted before now even with such things as these, and might have been again. She did not choose, however, to force his confidence. If he had anything to tell her she was always there, he knew that. If not, well, she must learn to do without his confidence. She tried hard to feel some regret for what seemed to her his evident disappointment; but this was more than even her sisterly heroism was equal to. If she refrained from rejoicing, it was as much as she could honestly achieve.

At last there came an evening when the Colonel apparently had no engagements, or if he had, he did not seem disposed to keep them. He came into the sitting-room where his sister was sitting with a book in her hands, and strolled up and down for a while with his hands in his pockets, whistling faintly, and moving his elbows up and down in accompaniment to his tune. It almost seemed to her that he was a little nervous, as if he were trying to wind his courage up to the point of saying something—something which did not come at all easily.

At last he came to a halt before her.

"Well, Fan!"

She looked up, wondering rather what he was going to say, and let her book fall upon her lap.

"I've—er—something to tell you. I don't know quite how you'll feel about it. I'm not even very sure how I feel about it myself. Still you've got to know it."

She still remained silent, puzzled, wondering. Her impression, ever since the day at San Fran-

cesco, had been that her brother had not anything to tell her; that whatever expectations he had cherished, whatever hopes may have been held out to him, had come to a collapse there; that, excepting in the way of sisterly condolence, which, apparently, was not acceptable, there was nothing for her to hear or to say. Now, however, it appeared there was. She waited for him to speak.

"I'm engaged to be married, Fan."

Poor Lady Frances! Her heart gave a cruel bound! A week ago she was prepared to hear this, and would have received it, if not without emotion, at least with composure. Now it came upon her with all the cruelty, with all the bitterness, of a surprise. Surely, surely everything had tended latterly to show that he was *not* going to be married—rather the contrary; that all that had come to an end a week ago. Since he was, however, there could be no question at all in her mind as to the person, and she tried, therefore, to summon the desired cordiality to her lips.

"Well, dear, you will have a beautiful wife, at any rate," she said, with a violent, almost an heroic effort.

The Colonel got red up to the very roots of his hair, and down to the very roots of his beard. "A beautiful wife!" he gasped in the tone of a man who has been gratuitously insulted. "What the—what on earth do you mean by that, Frances?"

His sister opened her eyes in astonishment. "Surely yes; beautiful!" she answered. "There are limits to the possibilities even of feminine detraction," she went on, smiling rather wanly, "and I don't see how any one, even a desperately jealous sister, could deny that Mrs Markham is a beautiful

woman. Did you expect me to do so?"

"But I'm not going to marry Mrs. Markham, as it happens," he retorted angrily.

"Not—going—to—marry—Mrs.—Markham!" This time Lady Frances got up—sprang up, rather—to her feet, then sat down again from sheer helpless bewilderment. "Not going to marry Mrs. Markham!" she repeated, in a tone of abject astonishment. "Who then, Hal, are you going to marry?"

"I am going—at least I'm engaged—to—to—to—to Madame Facchino."

"To Madame Facchino!"

She could only repeat his words and sit there, open-mouthed, helpless, mute. Had he said that he was engaged to be married to the Princess Vasarhely, or to Madame Bauche, her astonishment at the moment could hardly have been greater. To have all one's expectations, all one's apprehensions fixed upon one quarter, and then to receive a perfectly stunning knock-down blow from an opposite one!—it seemed to her for a moment as if everything were reeling and swimming around her.

"Yes, I thought you'd be a bit astonished!" the Colonel said, not without a certain satisfaction in that astonishment. "To tell you the truth, I'm a little astonished myself; I haven't got used to it, I suppose," he added ingenuously.

"But when?—how—how long has this been settled?" she said, recovering her voice at last with a violent effort. "It's not long since"—she stopped short—"since you seemed bent upon marrying another woman," she would have said, if she could have brought her lips to utter what would have sounded so like a taunt.

"Oh, not long—not above a

week," he responded easily, yet with a certain undisguisable embarrassment.

"And is it—is it absolutely settled?"

"Settled? Do you mean, can it be broken off? Well, I suppose it could, if you got her to see it in that light, which I don't suppose you could. You wouldn't propose *my* being the first to suggest it, would you? I thought you were one that had a prejudice in favour of one's keeping one's word!"—the Colonel was evidently trying to work himself up into a convenient condition of indignation.

"No, Hal, of course not—not if your word is promised," she replied despondently.

"Oh, it's promised fast enough. She wants to come and see you, to talk it all over with you, only she said I was to break it to you first. I believe she has rather an idea that you'd be against it—that you'd think she wasn't good enough—no money or anything of that sort, you know; and—well, perhaps, not exactly a Vere de Vere either—not that anybody thinks of that sort of thing nowadays. Look at old Skelmersgras married his own cook the other day, and lots of young fellows have done worse, ever so much worse. No one can say that I've done anything of that sort, can they?"

His sister simply looked at him wondering, her whole soul swallowed up for the moment in her wonder. Was he talking like this from pure bravado? Or was it—could it be that it really was the way in which he looked at the matter,—that it affected him no more, no deeper than that?

"I suppose it was settled that day you came back in the steam-boat?" she said at last—"the day, I mean, that we were all at San Francesco?"

"Yes, that was it—coming back from San Francisco." The Colonel took a turn or two about the room, putting up his hand from time to time to his beard, and tugging at it slightly. "But if you ask me how it did get settled, I'll be hanged if I can tell you, Fan! I was rather—rather in the dumps, and she was—well, awfully nice, you know—no woman could be more so; and I couldn't help saying how much pleasanter she was as a companion than people who thought ever so much more of themselves—just as I might to you, you know; and I didn't know how it was, but all of a sudden I found that she thought I meant—well, more than I did mean; that I—that I wanted her to stick by me always—to be my wife, in short. And—well, it struck me at the same time, that perhaps I couldn't er—under the circumstances, you know, do better. It would show—I mean—it would—well, it wouldn't be a bad sort of arrangement. Anyhow, I didn't say anything at once, and then—well, of course, it was too late then. I couldn't back out of it, could I?—not honourably, you know. And it would have been impossible, too, to make her understand—not but what she's an uncommonly sharp little woman, all the same, mind you!"

Lady Frances gave an inward groan. So that was the way of it, was it?—*that* was the way! How extraordinary! how incredible! how utterly inconceivable! Certainly to rush into matrimony with one woman because you happen to have just been refused, by another, if not, as we know, a very unusual performance, is one which seldom fails to impress the bystanders with the strongest sense of the innate illogicality of things. Because one

woman—rich, perhaps, and beautiful, with a dozen good gifts at command—declines to have you, to straightway rush and offer yourself to another, who has none of these merits; who is the very antipodes of everything you have hitherto supposed yourself to admire,—surely the thing would be incredible, but that we see it done and done, moreover, with a fair share of impunity, pretty nearly every day of our lives!

The Colonel, meanwhile, was evidently feeling that his explanation had gone off considerably better than could have been expected. He was quite at his ease again, and ready to expatiate upon the minor results of his sudden resolution.

"Of course we shan't be particularly brilliantly off," he observed, cheerfully. "I've told her so, and she quite understands it. In fact, I think she imagines that we shall be quite rich, with what I've got, according to her standard. People have such different ideas, you know."

"Whatever I have is yours, Hal. I hope you know that," his sister said, drearily. "We've never divided yet, but of course we must now. Everything will have to be different now."

"Oh, I'm not going to rob you, Fan, whatever happens, you may be sure of that," the Colonel answered decidedly.

"It's no question of robbing, dear. The money was left to me for us both, and as we're not going to be any longer together, of course it must be divided. What should I do with it all? It would only be a burden. You may be sure that was what my father meant."

"I can't say that I've ever seen it in that light," her brother answered, less positively, however, than he had spoken last: "Any-

how we'll not be so very badly off when one comes to think of it—not according to the notions people get when they live abroad. Besides, I expect she's a wonderful manager, Madame Facchino, I mean; she's bound to be, living the way she has. The fact is, Fan," he went on confidentially, "if a man is to marry—and I suppose most men are bound to drop into it sooner or later—I am not sure that it isn't about the wisest thing to do—well, the sort of thing I'm doing. Of course looks and money are capital things; but I'm not sure that a cheery little woman who knows what's what, and has never been used to extravagance, isn't about the best sort of a wife for a man in the long-run. It's fagging work always being on your P's and Q's with your wife; making up to her and flattering her, and all that. I expect, too, that a woman that's brought you a fortune, is awfully apt to throw it in your teeth if you chance to fall out. I don't mean that every woman would—you wouldn't of course, Fan, not if you married a costermonger; but I imagine they do as a rule—I'm pretty sure I should if I was a woman. And it must put a fellow in a most deucedly awkward position. For my own part I'd rather have half the money and be master in my own house. Doesn't it strike you so?"

Well, no, it did not exactly strike her so, but she let him talk on and on without interruption. It was not difficult to see what all this effusiveness meant. Having fallen, slipped rather, stumbled from pure inadvertence into this quandary, he was trying to persuade himself that he had done it with his eyes perfectly wide open; that it was a deliberately planned, clearly foreseen intention from the

beginning; not very prudent perhaps, liable to be stigmatised as foolish by people who saw no further than the surface, but in reality a thoroughly well thought out decision. Thought out! when ten minutes beforehand he had evidently, from his own account, had no more perception of what was in store for him than the babe unborn!

The strangeness did not seem to her very much less, after her new relative-elect had been to see her, which she duly did upon the very next day. She came in with a rush and a bustle, visibly crackling and rippling all over with elation and satisfaction, her ugly lively little face more like that of an intelligent marmoset than ever—a marmoset in this case which had found a nut. She had got on a new dress—a very smart one—and there were other indications that the years of the lean kine were at an end, and an era of prosperity felt to be inaugurated.

Despite her own trouble, Lady Frances could hardly help being amused and half mollified at sight of the other's superabounding and utterly irrepressible satisfaction. Heaven knows, she said to herself, she did not grudge the little woman any of her prospective joys, if only, only they could have been bought at a little, a very little, less costly rate; if any one but Hal, her own Hal, could have been the medium for providing them. She tried to be cordial, but the effort, it must be owned, was a failure. Her trouble was too fresh, too terribly real for concealment. Conversation fell dead; the Colonel, prudent man! kept away; even Madame Facchino's matchless powers were not equal to the strain. When she got up to take her leave, though the words on the other's lips were kindness itself, the trouble legible in her eyes, in her

whole face, was too tragically manifest to be overlooked, and she found herself creeping out of the room almost like one who has been detected in some piece of petty larceny!

So the days went on. The engagement was not formally announced, but everybody in Venice knew about it more or less, and much wit was expended over the event. The indirect cause of it had meantime left Venice, and was holding her court elsewhere. Another member of that court—some people said two—had in the interim put his fate to the touch and had sustained the same fall. It was away she had—so all who knew her declared. Each of the men who surrounded her believed that he himself was the chosen and favoured one, that he had received unmistakable marks of encouragement until his hour of disillusion came, and as her manner was outwardly equally little encouraging to all, her victims had not even the poor satisfaction of claiming sympathy in their discomfiture. The Colonel made no allusion whatsoever to his—in fact, so far as his sister was aware, never mentioned Mrs Markham's name at all. It was as if a sponge had been passed over the whole episode, and no traces whatsoever of it remained. Its indirect effects, on the other hand, were sufficiently permanent, although, after her first visit, Madame Facchino seldom came to the house. Neither, so far as his sister could observe, did the Colonel spend much time with his *fiancée*, though, when they happened to be together, she kept him amused and in good-humour as much as ever. At other times he was restless, visibly uncomfortable and uneasy. His first self-satisfactions, it was clear, had evaporated; he no longer

neglected her own society, if that were any comfort—on the contrary, would come a dozen times in the day into the room where she was sitting, wandering about, uttering some trivial remark, and then walking out again. Sometimes she caught his eye fixed intently, for minutes at a time, upon her own, as if there was something, some comfort which he was anxious, if possible, to extract out of them—something he wanted her to say or to do, she did not know what. It worried much more than it gratified her, seeing that there was obviously nothing that she could say or do that would have the smallest effect. Was not everything done, settled, finished?

"You—you think, I suppose, Fan, that I've been in—er—rather too great a hurry about all this, don't you?" he said abruptly one afternoon when they had been sitting for nearly an hour upon the balcony, he smoking, she laboriously telling up the columns of an account-book which had somehow got wrong. She would not go half-way to meet him, so merely laid down the account-book upon her knee, and waited with an interrogative glance for him to speak. "About this engagement of mine, I mean, of course," he added impatiently. "What else should I mean?"

"I don't know, dear. How can I tell? You are the best judge as to whether you have or not," she said dispiritedly. Then as he was beginning again—"Oh, don't speak to me, Hal; don't ask me about it; don't talk of it at all!" she suddenly burst out, with a gesture which sent the account-book flying off her knee on to the floor. "How can I tell? how can I judge fairly, or honestly, or rightly? How can a woman be trusted in such a matter, when it is her life, her home,

her whole heart, her very existence—everything she cares for—that is at stake? Let me be at peace. Don't ask me. Do what you choose—whatever you think right, whatever you think will be for your own happiness, your own comfort,—only, for pity's sake—for the sake of all the years we have spent together—don't ask *me!*”

The Colonel was so utterly taken aback at her vehemence, that he literally turned pale. An outburst of temper from his sister Frances was a thing unheard of—a thing absolutely portentous—phenomenal! Somehow or other, he had hardly realised all that his marriage meant for her. Had she been poor, it would probably have presented itself to him in clearer colours, but as it was, it really did not seem to him as if it made such *very* great odds. If she didn't care to go on living with him after he was married, as very possibly she mightn't, she could live anywhere she liked, and in whatever manner she preferred—stay in Venice, go elsewhere, do anything, in short, seeing that she had never even professed to be a dependent woman. Of course she was very fond of him, he knew that well enough. He was very fond of her, impossible to be more so; no man had ever had a better sister. Still a sister naturally *was* a sister,—and nobody in their senses ever expected arrangements of that kind to be absolutely binding and eternal.

“I suppose I couldn't very well get out of it now, eh, Fan?—could I? It would be rather—well, awkward, wouldn't it?” he said, in a somewhat quavering voice.

“I don't know, Hal,—don't ask me; I tell you I have nothing to do with it. Get out of it? Of course you can't get out of it *now*; how could you?” she an-

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swered, all in a breath, and in a tone bordering closely on ferocity. “Forgive me, dear, for being horribly cross,” she added, a minute later, stooping and picking up the unfortunate account-book. “But there's no use in my pretending that I can reconcile myself to it—now or *ever*. I don't wish her any harm, but I grudge, grudge, *grudge* you to her. If I were your wife twenty thousand times over, I couldn't grudge you more. What have I besides you? Who else in the wide world to care for but you? A wife! talk to me of a wife! How many wives are there, I should like to know, who have had forty years' companionship of their husbands? Of course I don't expect for a single moment that you should feel as I do. It would be impossible, unnatural; perhaps it is unnatural even that I should feel so; but as I do, for God's sake don't try to make me pretend that I am satisfied, when I am *not!*”

She got away to her own room after this second outburst, and threw herself down into a chair, hiding her head against the back of it. It did seem to her too hard—too utterly cruel! If he had loved her—this other woman—it seemed to her that it would have been so much easier to bear. Love the mighty makes its own laws, and all the older, simpler, homelier ties necessarily go down before it as the weaker goes down before the stronger. But there was no question of anything of the sort here; no pretence or suggestion even of love, any more than there was of advantage, suitability—anything, in short, at all!

Her home was broken up, her life left desolate, the comely order of the days all put out, and all for what? For a nothing, through a mistake, in a moment of aberration. A single sting of disappointed van-

ity which craved solace, two foolish words, and a chain was forged in a moment, which honour forbade to be broken ever and ever again ! But did honour absolutely forbid it ? that was the question. Why should such a foolish, such an utterly unreasonable bond, made in a moment of aberration, of heedlessness, fraught with such incalculable consequences, for him, for her, for all of them—why should it, she asked herself, be regarded as sacred ? Her brother, she could see well enough, was far from being satisfied with the wisdom of his own proceedings. If for a while, for a few moments, it had seemed to him a sort of necessity—a spirited rejoinder upon his part to the shabby trick which had been played upon him by Fortune—soberer reflection had convinced him that it was not perhaps such a very brilliant repartee after all. He shrank palpably from announcing his engagement—from facing the comments which, tacitly, at all events, it would have been certain to have been received—and had even exacted a promise from Madame Facchino that for the present she would refrain from publicly proclaiming it. Should he decide to relinquish this ridiculous engagement, and should his sister support him in so doing, who could seriously gainsay them ? Madame Facchino, it is true, might rave and storm, might declare herself the worst used of women, but what serious injury would that do them ? The inappropriateness was too manifest, too obvious—it flew to meet the eyes. What sort of a wife was this for a Mowbray—this ugly, grimacing, little, green-eyed woman, with her *bourgeoise* traditions, her Bohemian manners, her hundred and one shifts to get on, and to make ends meet ?

There was no *harm* in her—Lady Frances was anxious to be just—so far as she could see or learn there was nothing against her excepting her intense commonness. From the ends of her fingertips to the very bottom of her soul she was radically and incurably common—in her tastes, in her aspirations, in her very good-nature. A little, ugly, flippant, jocosse, good-natured vulgarian ! And *this* was the woman that Hal had engaged himself to marry ! No ; it could not, should not be, She herself would face the matter out ; she would have the courage of her opinions, take the helm in hand, and bear the whole weight of the responsibility, and, if need be, of the blame too, as she had done a hundred times before. What all her life long had she done but put herself in the breach ? and when had she ever had a better reason for doing so than now ? And then like a ghost, a thing of the night, impalpable, intangible, arose a pale spectre—the spectre of honour, her honour, his honour. His word was pledged—as surely, as irrevocably pledged as though this woman had been the youngest, most beautiful, tenderest of her sex,—perhaps more so, seeing that the less greater the temptation, the greater obviously the obligation to abide by his spoken word, or if not spoken even, then implied at any rate, and accepted. Women are not popularly supposed to have any very exalted standard of honour in such matters ; but if so, then in this respect, as in most others, Lady Frances differed from the great majority of her sex. With her it was a religion, a fetish to which she would cheerfully have sacrificed herself and any one belonging to her. Better anything else, better a hundred times that she should be miserable, better

even that Hal should be miserable; better anything and everything should happen, rather than that any hint of such a stain should visit their escutcheon. She would have cut off her own right hand before she put it to any such work; and without her aid, morally and physically unsustained by her, she felt absolutely certain he would never, never achieve his own deliverance. She knew him too well.

Meanwhile the days were passing steadily on, each with its invisible rivet rendering it more and more impossible to do anything at all. Gradually, very gradually, Lady Frances made up her mind. The thing, she told herself again, was done, was irrevocable; and there is a great deal of dreary satisfaction in a sense of the utterly irrevocable. If her home was doomed, well then, it was doomed, and she was not going to make more fuss about the matter than could be helped. What right, after all, had she to do so? Was she the first sister that had been left alone when her brother made up his mind to marry? Was it not, on the contrary, the invariable end to such arrangements as theirs, the sting which lay at the root of all such temporary unions? Happily she had a good deal to do too, and that helped to fill up her thoughts and the days. They were giving up their apartment, had already given notice to that effect to its owner. Its bigness had always been a fault, and under these changed circumstances, was of course more of a fault than ever. What the Colonel's future plans would be remained to be seen, but his sister had quite made up her mind that she at least was not going to live on in Venice. Further than this she did not see her way. The world was all before her where to choose, but it cannot be said

that she found any particular elation from that prospect!

Madame Facchino was also leaving; she was going, she said, to pay some visits to her relations in Belgium, and would then adjourn to England to meet her *fiancé*, and make the acquaintance of his relations. Everything was being taken down, put into big boxes, and corded up ready to be sent for whenever their destination was decided upon. The familiar rooms already wore an air of dismantled misery; the trail of the despoiler had passed over them all, and the sooner they were away now, Lady Frances felt, the better.

A few mornings before their final departure she happened to awake early, just as the first glow of dawn was beginning to play over the convolutions of the Canal. She found it impossible to get to sleep again, so put on a dressing-gown, and went out upon the balcony which communicated both with her own bedroom and the sitting-room. The weather within the last few days had become hot, and already, early as it was, the air which came to meet her was almost like the breath of a greenhouse. Venice looked like a city created for delight, but left vacant. Up and down in all the sinuous silvery reaches of the Canal, not a sound; in all the shut or open multitudes of windows not a face, not a sign of life. Only down at the *traghetto*, a man sat sleepily up in a gondola, and rubbed his eyes wearily for a moment before rolling heavily back again, face downwards, upon the cushions.

Lady Frances drew a camp-stool towards her, and sat down, leaning her elbows upon the stone balustrade, and looking out towards the satiny clearness of the lagoon. A big India-bound steamer, lying nearly opposite the Piazzetta, began to

show some signs of life, puffing out volumes of smoke into the unsullied air. A couple of gondolas, filled with men, put out presently towards it, their long thin forms, with the line of crowded heads above, suggesting the fantastic notion of a crew of South Sea Islanders bent upon a war-track. So still was it that the falling of a couple of planks upon the deck of a barge half a mile away sounded quite loud and reverberating in the silence. Suddenly, with a great whirring of wings, a detachment of the doves of St Mark's swept by, alighting upon the *campo*, and beginning to search about for bread-crumbs underneath the windows, the newly risen sun shining upon their brilliant neck-feathers. Lady Frances put her head suddenly down upon the balustrade and sobbed aloud. A great yearning love for Venice rose, brimmed over, and seemed to flood her heart—for Venice itself, apart from all whom it contained, and even all that it suggested. Never until now that she was leaving it had she realised how completely it had wound itself round her heartstrings; not like a place at all,—a town—a mere aggregation of bricks and mortar,—but like a living thing—a sister; something that it was like a tearing asunder of the very heart within her to think that she might never see again. She let her head lie along the unresponsive length of the balustrade, and sobbed like a child that has been robbed of its home.

She was roused by a sound not far off; a sound of something moving in the next room but one, which was that occupied by the Colonel—the dull jerking scrape of something moderately heavy being pulled over the tiled floor. What could it be? she wondered. It was unlike Hal to be astir so early; neither was it his valet's custom to

invade his master's chambers thus prematurely. Presently the sound ceased, and the next moment there was a movement of the boards under her feet, and leaning a little forward, she saw that the Colonel himself was standing at his doorway, which opened like her own upon the balcony.

He was dressed, but instead of his coat, had pulled on the famous red-and-brown dressing-gown, which figured in the first scene of this little history, and over which the wealth of his auburn beard spread itself with its wonted luxuriance. If the beard and the dressing-gown were the same, the expression of their wearer was widely different from what it was upon that placid and cheerful occasion. The poor Colonel's face had a hunted, care-driven aspect, which sat oddly, and as it were pathetically, upon his naturally cheerful and care-defying lineaments. His forehead was crumpled up to the roots of his hair; and as if to balance this, his moustaches, upon the other hand, trailed dismally at the corners. His whole aspect was that of a man to whom the facing of a decision is pain and grief unspeakable, but who has been driven by the despotism of circumstance into doing so; a moody desperation was legible even in the set of his necktie. He started when he perceived his sister, and half drew back as if he would have gone in, but perceiving the futility of this, advanced on the contrary a few steps, and stood with his hands upon the railing, looking out over the gradually brightening lengths of water.

Lady Frances waited a moment, expecting him to speak or to make some movement towards her. Then, seeing that he did not do either, she crossed over to the portion of the balcony which lay

in front of the sitting-room, and which brought them within easy speaking distance of one another.

"How early you are, Hal!" she said in as cheerful a tone as she could muster. "Didn't you sleep well, dear?"

"No, but that's nothing new. I haven't slept well for a week past."

"How is that?"

He took no notice of the question, but remained looking moodily out across the Canal, as if trying to distinguish something which lay upon the opposite side. Suddenly, without lifting his head or changing his posture, he added abruptly—

"I've made up my mind about something, Fan. I'm going to break this off!"

She started, and leaned forward so as to try and catch a glimpse of his face. "Your marriage, do you mean, Hal?" she said quickly. "You mean to break off your marriage?"

"My engagement. It's not a marriage yet."

"It's very nearly one," she answered gravely.

"There's a great deal of difference."

"How are you going to do it?" she inquired, without pausing to discuss this point. Then, as he did not immediately answer—"You are going to see her, I suppose?" she added.

He winced. "No, I am *not* going to see her!" he said irritably. "I'm writing to her; I have written, in fact."

"Have you sent the letter?"

"No, I'm sending it. It's in there;" he jerked his head back towards the room. There was a few minutes' pause, and then he added—"I couldn't go to see her, Fan; upon my life, I couldn't. Besides, it would spoil everything."

"It won't make any great difference, dear, so far as I can see," she

answered. "Of course, the instant she receives your letter she will come off here; and you can't well tell the servants to forbid her the door after all that has taken place, can you?"

He moved uneasily, and glanced behind him, as if already expecting to see the door fly open, and the figure of an aggrieved and indignant woman appearing upon the threshold.

"One needn't be here to see her when she comes," he said defiantly.

Instantly there rushed back upon Lady Frances's mind the sound which she had heard ten minutes ago, and which had then so puzzled her. She knew now what it was perfectly. It was the Colonel's big portmanteau, pulled forward by the Colonel's own hands!

"You don't mean to say that you are going away, Hal?" she said—a ring of astonishment, not unmingled with something like contempt, appearing in her tone. "Running away," she added emphatically.

The Colonel reddened. "you may call it what you choose, Fan," he said angrily; "all I tell you is, that there is only one way of breaking it off, and that is for me to go away. If I stay and see her again, it will be all up with me. I know how it would be as well as if it had happened already. She wouldn't get into a rage or storm like any other woman might; not a bit of it. She'd simply laugh and joke as if it were the merest trifle, and begin and talk about a hundred other things, and then bring the conversation round to it again bit by bit, with that tongue of hers which would wheedle the very birds off the trees, and before half an hour was over I should find myself walking away just as tightly engaged as ever! She's a deuced clever woman, I

can tell you," Madame Facchino's betrothed asseverated solemnly.

"If she makes light of what you say, it seems to me she could make light just as well of what you write. What is to hinder her?" his sister inquired.

"She can't well do that, if there is black and white, all the more if she don't see me," he answered.

"She will go after you."

"How can she? She won't know my address. I shall go to Roumania—to the Bajerhoffs, you know. I've always intended to shoot there some spring, and I'll go this. I couldn't have a better opportunity."

"Even if you go and live there, you can't vanish utterly from the face of the earth, can you? You will have to leave your address with some one."

"I'll only leave it with you, Fan."

"Well, and if you do, I must give it to her if she asks me for it, of course, dear," she replied convincingly.

The Colonel jumped as if he had been shot, and turned round with mouth and eyes widely open.

"Fan!" he almost shouted, and stood there staring in the extremity of his astonishment. "You, Fan, *you* to turn upon me like that? Gad! I wouldn't have believed it if an archbishop had sworn it! What has happened to you since last week? You were wild then against this marriage, so that I thought *you* at least would be delighted when I told you that I had made up my mind to break it off. In fact it was on your account nearly as much as on my own that I decided to do so, because you told me that you'd be lonely, and all that sort of thing; and instead of that you are wishing, actually *wishing*, me to go on with it."

"I don't wish it, dear, you know that perfectly well, but I don't see what my wishes have to say to it, one way or other," she answered quietly. "The fact remains that you *are* engaged to her, and that being the case, *she* has a perfect right, it seems to me, to know where you are."

"But I shouldn't be engaged if I break off the engagement, don't you see?"

"You can't do that, Hal—not without her consent."

"Nonsense, Fan! Dozens of men do it every day in the year."

"I don't know how many dozen men may do so, dear, but I am perfectly certain that no gentleman *ever* does so," his sister said, decidedly.

The poor Colonel's puckered brow grew even gloomier and more puckered than before, and he kicked his foot viciously against the base of the railing. "All right, then, you *wish* me to go on with it," he said. "And it will be all *your* doing, mind, if it don't turn out well, and I'm wretched—remember that! You set her feelings and interests above mine, you think of her first. I don't say but what it's perfectly right and proper, but it's not being what I call sisterly," Colonel Hal concluded vindictively.

"I don't care the very least about her feelings—I have vet to learn that she has any; but I care everything about your honour, dear."

"Honour! Stuff! You may trust a man to take care of his own honour without your help! You live shut up with your books and your own notions so, that you don't know how people—reasonable men and women—look at such things. Every man can't go on with a thing because he has been fool enough to let himself in for it! By Jove! when I come to

look at the thing nearer, I wonder how I could ever have wished to marry any woman, if she were the Venus de Medici! One would never be one's own master again!" the poor Colonel exclaimed, ruffling up his hair and beard into the wildest and most picturesque disorder, as he ruefully contemplated his prospective slavery.

"I am afraid you should have thought of that sooner, dear," his sister replied ruthlessly. "No, don't think I say it for the sake of making myself disagreeable; but if you had only seen a little more clearly what your own feelings really were before you asked her to marry you, why then——"

"I never *did* ask her to marry me at all, as it happens!"

"Well, you allowed her to *think* you had done so."

"She knew perfectly well that I had done nothing of the sort. She only pretended that she thought I had done so; and I—well, I suppose I wanted the presence of mind, or the brutality, or something, to tell her that she was a humbug, as I ought to have done. And—in short, you know the whole story, Fan, as well as I do, so there is no use in going over it again!"

"I know, Hal—you told me; but I don't see that it really affects the question."

"You don't see any difference between my proposing to her, and her accepting me without my proposing?"

"No; I'm afraid not. Of course, at the time you could have put matters right; perhaps even within two or three days afterwards—I don't know; but now that it has been going on for weeks, and that you have allowed her to proceed upon the supposition that she is to be your wife, and to make all her preparations with that idea,

and to tell her friends, as I have no doubt she has done—why, how can you break it off with any approach to honour? It wouldn't be commonly honest. I wonder you don't see it so yourself, dear. It would be simply *cheating*."

The Colonel's face was a study of emotions, in which anger remained predominant. Before he had time to make any rejoinder, however, Lady Frances went on.

"There is only one possible way that I can see to get out of it," she said steadily. "You must get *her* to consent to it."

"Get her to consent to it! Now you're talking greater nonsense than ever, Fan! Consent to it? Why upon earth should she consent to it? She has everything to gain by the marriage, and nothing to lose. What inducement could you possibly offer her to break it off?"

"There is always money."

"Money! To buy her off, you mean? And you call *that* acting delicately, do you—that having a regard for my honour, and all the rest of it! I don't want to marry her, if I can help it; I'd much rather not. Not that I don't like her well enough in a way, but I don't want to marry her, or any one; I was a fool when I thought I did; I'm ever so much better off as I am. But though I don't want to marry her, I don't think so poorly of her as to suppose for a moment that she'd take money to give me up."

"And yet you were proposing to make her give you up without any equivalent at all!"

For all answer Colonel Hal turned on his heel and walked off to his own room—the only resource left to a man and a brother when thus ungenerously driven into a corner by a woman and a sister, whom polite custom and

family affection prevented his swearing at.

Lady Frances stayed where she was a minute or two, and then followed him. Even the outward aspect of the room would have told an intelligent looker-on that a desperate resolution had been arrived at by its occupant, and was in the act of being carried through with all the impetuosity of one who fears the first fiery impulse may evaporate before he has had time to execute it. The Colonel's travelling clothes had been dragged from their usual receptacles, and were scattered wildly over chairs in its vicinity; the big portmanteau, whose progress across the tiles Lady Frances had heard, lay extended upon the floor in a prodigious yawn; and upon a table near at hand lay a couple of notes, hastily penned, and still more hastily blotted, one of which his sister, with half an eye, perceived to be directed to herself.

She waited a minute or two without saying anything, while he moved about, affecting to ignore her presence, and to continue his preparation for an immediate start. Then she said—

"Write another note, Hal. Tell her that, on further consideration, you feel that it is really impossible for you to go on with your engagement. Tell her that you know you are behaving abominably badly—which, of course, you are—but that you throw yourself upon her mercy; and that, if by any means you could make amends for your misconduct, you are quite ready to do so. And then wait and see what she says."

The poor man, thus baited, flung the garment which he happened to have in his hand at the moment down upon the nearest chair, and himself into another, where he sat gazing in dramatic misery at his

tormentor, his red-and-brown dressing-gown falling in tragic folds around him.

"A very pleasant sort of letter that would be for a man to have to write to a lady he is engaged to, wouldn't it?" he said witheringly. "Pleasant for me to have to write, and most particularly pleasant for her to have to answer!"

"Would it be any worse than that one?" she inquired, pointing to the table; then before he could reply, "Mind, I'm not urging you to do it, Hal. I've never suggested your breaking off your engagement, have I? I know I lost my temper about it the other day, but I promise not to do even that again; and if you feel that you can go on with it and be happy, why, by all means do, and I will never utter another syllable. But, on the other hand, if you mean to break it off, it seems to me that there's only one way you can do it—you must get her consent."

"And I tell you, Fan, that it's not to be done, *not to be done*, don't you hear?" he replied positively. "I know her better than you do a long way. She'd never let me off—never. She knows better."

"She must, Hal, if you are to get out of it at all," she returned with at least equal decision. "As to running away and leaving everything unsettled, and—and breaking your word, Hal, dear, you must know *that* couldn't be done! In fact, I am sure you never would have done so, it was just an idea that passed through your mind. You never would have carried it out—never; I know you better than you know yourself."

The Colonel said nothing, but his face expressed the modified obstinacy of a man whose resolution is gradually getting undermined. He was not at all sure that his sister did know him better than he did himself; in

fact he was perfectly clear that in this particular instance she did not. The courage which it takes to fly—not such a very inconsiderable portion either, if one thinks of it—he certainly possessed, for he had already wound himself up to it; but the courage that it takes to stay and face out the worst—that, he tremblingly owned to himself, that he was far, very far, from being able to lay his hands on. It was clear to him—clear as the sun which was then lighting up the top of the Dogana—that there was only one way of getting out of this dilemma in which he found himself, and that one was flight. It might not be heroic, it might not be particularly straightforward, or possibly, even, as his sister said, gentleman-like, but it was the *only* way. Any other attempt would be a mere rattling and shaking of the captive's chains; very uncomfortable to himself, and not productive of the slightest result in the end. As he himself said, he *knew* this woman whom he had engaged himself to marry.

Upon the other hand there was now this other woman whom he also knew—his sister, his friend; the lifelong sharer of all his projects and intentions, and keeper to some extent of his conscience—a sufficiently formidable figure, standing right in the very path of his retreat. If he had only not had the ill luck to come upon her at so preposterously an early hour of the morning! he thought irritably, there would have been plenty of time to be off and away before she suspected anything; and once gone—the thing definitely done—though she might have been very indignant, and might have said several very unpleasant things about it when they next met, there was also no question in his own mind but what she would have forgiven him in the long-run. Now, how-

ever, that she knew of his intention beforehand, the whole aspect of affairs was changed, and changed unquestionably for the worse. A sense of that unreasonable and quite unwarrantable chanciness, which has so often interfered with the destiny of men and of nations, was strong upon the poor Colonel's mind at that moment. What could have induced Frances to go prowling about the house at such an hour of the morning, instead of remaining in her bed like a reasonable woman? he thought, with natural indignation.

"It would take a deuce of a lot of money to compensate her!" he said at last, sullenly.

"Yes; enough to make up a regular income, wouldn't it? Listen, Hal, and don't interrupt me, dear, for a moment; I have been thinking it all over. Your money, being in land, would be out of the question—you couldn't touch it; whereas there is that thirty thousand pounds of mine, simply invested in the Funds, and we could get at it almost at any moment. This is what I propose. Offer her half, and see what she says to it."

"Half! Fifteen thousand pounds? Are you crazy, Fan? Offer her half your fortune?"

"Yes; what then? I should still have the other half. You said yourself just now that it would take a lot of money to compensate her, and of course it would."

"I never said that I was going to take half your money—to make a beggar of you! Did I?"

"Nonsense, Hal. It is you now that are not talking reason. Who ever heard of a single woman with seven or eight hundred a-year being a beggar?"

"You may take your oath I'll never touch a penny of yours for any such purpose, even if it would do any good, which it wouldn't; so put that out of your mind once

for all," the Colonel said, in the tone of a man whose mind is irrevocably made up.

"Not to please me, dear? not to give me the greatest possible pleasure I could have?" she urged, taking hold of his sleeve, and pulling it gently as she tried to catch his eye. "You can offer her less first, you know," she went on; "and if she stands out, offer her more and more till she is satisfied. Hal, dearest, what in the world *does* the money matter? Surely we could be happy anywhere together upon half or quarter of it, so long as we only were together?"

The Colonel did not pluck his sleeve away, as he felt much inclined to do, but he looked moodily out of the window, instead of responding to the glance which sought his own. Frances's recklessly magnanimous disregard of money in larger matters, had before now annoyed him, but never so much as to-day. In the everyday household details he was disposed to think her a trifle stingy, and had more than once openly derided her cheese-paring notions and miserly regard for candle-ends; and this everyday penuriousness seemed to bring this other and opposite characteristic of hers into all the more strong relief. "Women were an extraordinary mixture!" he observed to himself, as many another and a wiser man has remarked before him.

"I tell you, Fan, that's all nonsense—the merest moonshine," he said authoritatively. I don't mean that it isn't very good and generous, and all that of you, but you don't understand the matter at all. Madame Facchino isn't an adventuress, as you seem to imagine. She may like money well enough—no doubt most people do—but it isn't the money in this case she wants so much as the mar-

riage itself, the position and the prestige, the whole thing. It is *me* she wants," the Colonel added, not without a certain solemnity.

Before Lady Frances could answer, the door was cautiously opened, and her brother's Italian valet appeared with a can of hot water in his hand, advancing with careful steps, for fear of prematurely disturbing his master's slumbers. He started back on perceiving the two figures in earnest conversation near the window, and would have discreetly retired, but she felt that the discussion had already been sufficiently prolonged, and that nothing would at present be gained by continuing it, so withdrew instead to her own room, leaving her brother to continue his interrupted toilet. At breakfast the servants were also present, and the conversation was therefore kept to generalities; but in the course of the day they recurred to the previous topic, and at last the Colonel agreed to write a sort of modified version of the letter first sketched out by his sister, protesting vehemently all the time that he knew that it wasn't the least use, and would merely make a horrible rumpus for nothing, but that he just did it to content her, and to prove to her how entirely she was in the wrong.

All that day they waited in a state of feverish suspense, expecting every moment to see the door fly widely open, and Madame Facchino appear upon the threshold. Their attitude was wasted, however. No Madame Facchino appeared, neither did she write or send. In the course of the following day, however, there did arrive a short note of two lines, requesting the Colonel would kindly look in that evening. She had a relaxed throat which confined her to the house, otherwise she would not have trouble him, she said. To

this there could only be one reply, and the Colonel went.

"You'll see she'll never agree to anything of the sort, not if we were to offer her every penny we possess in the world, and ever so much more upon top of that," he said, with a sort of gloomy satisfaction, as he stood smoothing down his hat previous to departing upon his momentous errand. "It's *me* she wants, I tell you," he added, putting it upon his head with an air of desperation, not, however, unmingled with a certain jauntiness.

It appeared that he was right. What took place exactly upon that occasion Lady Frances never learnt, but apparently the Colonel's efforts to achieve his own deliverance had been of the feeblest. It was nearly one o'clock when he returned, and found his sister still sitting up waiting for him in the same chair as he had left her in three or four hours previously.

"Well?" she inquired anxiously, as he came into the room.

"Well what? There's nothing to say well about!"

"Do you mean that she won't give you up?"

"No, of course not. I always told you she wouldn't. Nobody in their senses would ever have imagined that she would!" he answered, seating himself in a chair, and stretching his feet out luxuriously before him.

"What did she say? What answer did she make to your letter? She must have made some answer."

"She didn't say much. There were some other fellows there, and there was some music, and the usual sort of thing going on, and she only said a word or two to me just as I was coming away. She is a deuced clever little woman, as I have told you before," Colonel Hal repeated, not without a cer-

tain prospective pride in so remarkable a phenomenon.

It was the last struggle of the captive for freedom! For a little while longer Lady Frances still cherished hopes of a different end to the drama, but in this she deceived herself; nay, oddly enough, the Colonel after this not merely resigned himself without another struggle to his destiny, but became almost cheerful and jocund over his prospects. As he could not effect his escape absolutely and without leaving a trace behind him, it seemed to him better, probably, to take the thing resignedly and comfortably, rather than to wear himself out with kicking against pricks which would never yield an inch to his efforts.

It seemed very unaccountable to his sister that one mood should follow so closely upon the heels of the other, but so it was, and she was obliged to recognise the fact. She could not help feeling, too, that there had been a certain degree of fatality in that joint piece of early rising upon the part both of herself and her brother. If they had only selected different days for their wakefulness, how different might the event have been! She did not quite go the length of wishing that it had been so, for that would have been immoral, but she sighed now and then as she reflected over it. The stars in their courses had certainly fought for Madame Facchino, since even her adversary's efforts had turned in the end so distinctly to her advantage. When, a few days later, the two ladies met, that astute little personage was as amiably alert and deferential as ever, showing no symptom whatsoever of any consciousness of what had recently taken place, the only difference in her manner being that it had certainly quite lost that slight touch of conscious culpability

which it had shown when the engagement had been first announced.

Lady Frances accepted defeat. Had there been a possibility of continuing the struggle, she would have fought it out to the last; but there was none, and she could not shut her eyes to the fact. She collected her personal possessions, set her house in order, and one day in mid-June, when Venice had passed into that sleepy summer state in which it is her custom to doze away the dog-days,—when everything and everybody looked dreamy and ghost-like, and the air had a vapourish warmth like that of a well-kept fernhouse,—she and her maid were rowed down the oily-looking length of the Canal to the railway station, leaving Colonel Hal to follow a few days later. It was her last good-bye to Venice, she told herself, as she stood stiff, impassive, and British, keeping guard over her umbrellas and sandwich-basket, amongst a crowd of *facchini* and *gondolieri* who pushed, elbowed, shouted, perspired, gesticulated around her,—her last good-bye in all human probability for life.

In this she was, however, as it turned out, mistaken; for about the middle of the winter she received an urgent letter from the Princess Vasarihely, entreating, nay, desiring her to come out to her at once without a single moment's delay. She was bad, very bad indeed, she said; she had pains in both her legs, also a feeling of numbness down the middle of her back. The doctor said it was nothing in particular, but she herself knew better. Bauche was more useless than ever; she had had the rheumatism; her deafness had become worse; she was really too stupid for anything. She herself wanted Fanchon—wanted her badly. Whatever she

was doing, she was to leave it all at once and come.

Lady Frances did not attempt to resist the call. She went back to Venice, and spent the whole of what remained of that winter and the following spring in the house near the Redentore. It was an unusually cold wet season, and the fogs were tremendous—phantom armies, with long white arms far outstretched parading unceasingly up and down the grey face of the Canal, enveloping the churches and the shipping, even the walks and alleys of the garden, which seemed filled with some sort of finely carded cotton-wool, which gave way before you as you advanced, and closed tightly in again upon you immediately afterwards.

Some months previous to this Colonel Hal's fate had been sealed, and he and Madame Facchino—whose maiden name, it appeared, had been Goppin—were duly married in a certain church in London. Lady Frances had attended the wedding, but had not seen much of the wedded pair since. To those who have followed the poor Colonel's struggles with his destiny with any interest, it may afford a certain satisfaction to know that that destiny turned out to be a very much less severe one than might have been expected from the fashion in which it had come about, and from his own feverish, if abortive, attempts to escape from it. For one thing, once the fatal day was past and the fatal noose tied, his own native and hereditary light-heartedness rose to the rescue. It was not in the nature of things that he should long continue to nourish an implacable grudge against his lot, particularly one which showed itself to be susceptible of so many and such really respectable alleviations. Never was there a conjugal coach driven

with a lighter rein than that upon which the *ci-devant* Madame Facchino kept her finger! Her one object, her first and most sacred duty in life—so she told her friends—was to keep her husband amused, and hinder his ever, even for a single instant, being bored. There may be, probably there are, nobler and loftier standards of wifely duty; but it is at least to Mrs. Henry Mowbray's credit to say that in hers she was in the main eminently successful!

When Lady Frances returned to the Guidecca they had already been some time settled in Paris, which in many respects suited both admirably as a winter residence. For the Colonel it had many merits, including that of abounding variety; while to his wife, as a Belgian, it had naturally the almost sacred charm of being the original of which most of the places she knew best were copies; while both agreed in finding it immeasurably superior as a place of residence to Venice. The great merit of the latter, Mrs. Mowbray was wont to pronounce authoritatively, was its cheapness; there was nowhere where you could get so much for so little. In most respects it was, in her opinion, an utterly detestable place, but in point of cheapness it was really divine. Once you had enough to live upon, however, once you were not obliged to look religiously after every miserable *soldo*, why, then, there was no reason for staying there more than anywhere else—every reason, in fact, for *not* staying there. In winter, O heavens! what she had suffered there in winter was not to be told; no one who did not know Venice could imagine or believed it! For her own part, she hoped devoutly never to see its odious, slimy shores again, or, at the very most, only for a week in the spring. Yes,

for a week, perhaps at the utmost stretch two weeks, at a hotel in the month of May, Venice was tolerable, but at all other times and seasons it was simply detestable; and so other people would say if they had only half her honesty.

It was not one of the points in which she and her sister-in-law were ever at unison! For Lady Frances, Venice was Venice still, even though the harrow had gone over her threshold, and the little foxes made havoc amongst her grapes. When, therefore, the Princess Vasarhely died—which she did late in the spring which followed the events recorded in this little history—and it was found that she had carried out her threat, and left the house and everything she possessed on the Guidecca to Frances Mowbray, the latter, after a few struggles, meekly accepted it. She sat herself down in her old friend's place, and fed her hosts of canary-birds, and saw that Titi and the parrot had what they liked for their dinners, and spent a great many hours under the big cypresses, with Madame Bauche knitting beside her. She is not perhaps the happiest woman in the whole world, but then neither is she by many degrees the least so. The *sandolo*, with Michael Angelo in it, and not less beautiful than of yore, waits untiringly for her hour after hour amongst the sea-weed. The sea and the sky woo her unceasingly to come out and see what new combinations they have discovered since she saw them last. She is very peaceful, very quiet, sufficiently occupied, and has not certainly more social requirements made upon her than she feels she can adequately respond to. And that—as all who know her intimately are aware—is alone a source of no inconsiderable solace and satisfaction to her.

A RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHER ON ENGLISH POLITICS.

ABOUT five-and-twenty years ago, I happened to be engaged in the service of my country in a distant part of the world. The duties which devolved upon me threw me into a daily contact with a Russian officer similarly employed. Notwithstanding the conflicting interests which we severally represented, and the somewhat delicate and often strained relations resulting therefrom, we had not been long in each other's society without becoming sensible of a personal sympathy too powerful to be resisted, and which soon ripened into an intimacy which lasted for many years: indeed we were thrown so exclusively upon our own resources, deprived as we were of all other society, that we must probably soon either have become bitter enemies or fast friends. A certain similarity of taste, I had almost said of aspiration, forced upon us the latter alternative; and it was probably due to this that we were enabled to bring the special duties upon which we were engaged to a successful conclusion, whereby we earned the approval of our respective Governments,—represented in his case by a decoration, and in mine by a curt complimentary despatch; for in those days C.B.'s and C.M.G.'s were not flung about with the lavish profusion which has since so largely depreciated their value. It was a relief, when the labours of the day were over—which had taxed all our powers of ingenuity and forbearance, and we had fatigued our brains by inventing compromises and devising solutions which should satisfy the susceptibilities of our respective Governments—to jump on our horses and take a sharp dash

across country, just by way of clearing our brains of diplomatic cobwebs. Generally we played at follow-my-leader, and we took it in turns to be leader; for we were both young, and had, in fact, been weighted with responsibilities beyond our years, which made us rush into a reaction that consisted in an active endeavour to break our necks every afternoon with all the keener zest,—to the intense astonishment of the natives of the uncivilised region to which we had been temporarily banished. Then, as we jogged slowly home, we would fall into those discussions, on social, religious, psychological, and moral problems, by which our souls were vexed, which lasted through dinner, and often far into the night. I found in my companion an earnestness, depth, and originality of sentiment which were most remarkable in one so young, the more especially as I had not supposed that his training and early associations had been of a character to develop that side of his nature; possibly the very restraints to which he had been subjected had stimulated his instincts for independent thought and speculation. Knowing English, French, and German almost as well as his mother-tongue, he had read extensively and greedily in all three languages; and, owing to certain family circumstances, he had spent the most part of his life away from his native land, applying himself, with an acuteness and a faculty of observation extraordinary in one so young, to a study of the political institutions, social conditions, and national characteristics of the different European countries in which he had lived. So precocious

did his intelligence appear to me in this respect, that I soon came to consider myself in some degree a sort of disciple; and I have always been conscious that his influence during the nine months that we were together affected my own subsequent views of life, and indeed to some extent moulded my future. In the course of these discussions he unburdened himself to me on all subjects as fully as he would have done to a brother—indeed, considering who his brother was, far more freely; and did not shrink from commenting upon the social and political condition of his own country, and from giving vent to opinions which would probably have consigned him to the mines of Siberia for life had he been known to entertain them. The confidence which he thus displayed towards me only served to bind us more closely together, though I was ever haunted by the fear that the day might come when he might misplace it, with consequences which might be fatal to himself. As he was absolutely devoid of all personal ambition, this would be of little moment, if it only resulted in the abrupt termination of his career, which, from his natural independence of character, I anticipated could not long be postponed. It occurred even sooner than I expected. Within six months of my parting from him, I received a letter in which he told me he had fallen into disgrace, and was going to live in Italy. The exigencies of my own service had taken me to a very different part of the world; but we kept up, nevertheless, an active correspondence for some years, during which he occasionally sent me notes of a book he was writing, in letters which continued to exhibit more and more the results of his extensive reading and profound

faculty of observation, philosophic speculation and generalisation. Suddenly, about fifteen years ago, and without a word of warning, these ceased. All my letters remained unanswered; and when, some time afterwards, I found myself in Rome, and inquired at the address to which I had sent them, it was only to learn that the present proprietors of the house were comparatively new people, and had never heard of him. Meantime I had myself retired from the service, and being of a wandering and unsettled disposition, had only returned to my own country for a few months at a time. I had lived too long in summer climes, and under less conventional restraints, to be happy in it; but one of my constant regrets was that I had never thought of providing my Russian friend with a permanent address, so that in case of his ever being able or willing to communicate with me again, he might know where to find me. Meanwhile I could only account for his silence by the painful supposition that he had in some manner incurred the severe displeasure of his Government, and was languishing in that distant, semi-arctic region which is hermetically sealed to all communication with the outside world.

My delight may easily be imagined, therefore, when scarce two months ago, chancing to be a passenger on board a steamer in the Mediterranean, I found myself seated the first day at dinner next to a man, the tones of whose voice I thought I recognised, though I was for a moment puzzled by the alteration in his general appearance, and who turned out to be my long-lost friend, upon whom, as I looked at the furrows on his countenance, I saw that something more than time—though it had extended over twenty-five years—had

worked a change. This same interval had, doubtless, done something for me; so we both looked at each other for a moment in hesitation before permitting the joy of mutual recognition to burst forth. We soon found, on comparing notes, that we had been longing to find each other, and that nothing now prevented our pitching our tent together on the sunny Mediterranean shore, in the hope and belief that we should find that the companionship which had suited us so well twenty-five years previously, would only be rendered more full of interest and profit by the experiences which we had undergone since that period; nor had we conversed an hour before we became convinced that, however much we might have changed in outward appearance, our affection for each other, and our human sympathies generally, had undergone no alteration. It is therefore in a villa surrounded by orange-groves, with terraces overlooking the sea, built curiously into the fissures of impending rock, that I am writing this; or, to be more strictly accurate, I should say it is in a summer-house attached to the villa, fifty feet beneath which the sea is rippling in ceaseless murmur, while my friend, stretched on a Persian rug in the shade formed by the angle of the wall with the overhanging rock, here covered with a creeping jasmine, heavy with blossom, is watching the smoke of his cigarette, and listening while I read to him passages here and there of the notes which I had taken of our last night's conversation. It had been suggested by the arrival of letters and newspapers from England, and it occurred to me that the remarks of my friend as a calm and unprejudiced observer upon the present political, social, and moral condi-

tion of my own country, possessed a value which justified me in asking his permission to be allowed to publish them, the more so as he had just returned from spending some months in London; and he was of far too liberal and philosophical a temperament and cosmopolitan training and sympathy to be influenced by national prejudice; while, had he ever been once biassed by it, the treatment he had undergone at the hands of his own Government would have long since effectually removed it.

"I will introduce you to the public by telling the story of our previous acquaintance, just as it occurred," I observed. This the reader will remark that I have already done; but I did not read my introduction to my friend, as I knew he would have raised strong objections to the complimentary passages. "Now tell me what I am to call you?"

"Ivan is safe, simple, and not far from the truth, unless you prefer a pair of initials like my well-known countrywoman O. K. It has amused me to observe," he added, with a smile, "as I have watched the performances, social, literary, and political, how much more easy it is for a woman to understand the genius of a man than the genius of a nation."

"Perhaps that is because the nation is composed of women as well as of men," I replied.

"After all, it comes to pretty much the same thing," said Ivan; "for the genius that he understood well enough to beguile, seems to apprehend equally well the genius of the nation he governs, or he could not have beguiled it in the sense she desired. The whole incident serves to illustrate the mystery of woman's true sphere of influence, so little understood by

the women themselves who agitate for their rights."

"I am not disposed to admit," I answered, "that the incident in question proves your case; for I know none of your own countrymen, to say nothing of the women, who understand the genius of the English people, for to do so implies an apprehension of the genius of their institutions, and it is the incapacity of foreigners generally to appreciate these which causes them to regard our domestic policy in the light of an unfathomable mystery which it is hopeless to attempt to penetrate, and our foreign policy as a delusion and a snare."

"When your Government gets into difficulties," said Ivan, "it certainly goes to work to get out of them in a way exactly the opposite to that which other European Governments, and especially we in Russia, are in the habit of pursuing. Foreign policy is with us the great safety-valve by which the bubbling passions of the country find a vent, and our central authority takes refuge from its troubles in foreign wars and schemes of territorial aggrandisement; your Government pursues a diametrically opposite system, and considers, apparently, that its best chance of safety lies in stirring up domestic broils, and exciting the people to fever-heat of political passion among themselves. In other words, while our statesmen believe that they can best secure their own positions and avert the perils arising from misgovernment by distracting public attention from internal affairs and rushing into dangers abroad, yours hope to escape the consequences of their blunders abroad by promoting revolutionary tendencies at home. It would be curious to analyse the causes which have resulted in such opposite political methods,

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the more especially as both, in their different ways, are equally prejudicial to the highest national interests, and, from a philosophical point of view, would furnish a most interesting political and sociological study. As it is, my own country produces upon me the effect of a dashing young woman, still intoxicated with her youthful conquests and greedy for more, while she refuses to admit that a gnawing disease is preying upon her vitals, still less to apply any remedies to it; in yours, on the other hand, I seem to see an old woman in her dotage, who makes blatant and canting profession of that virtue which her age and feebleness have imposed upon her as a necessity, while she paints, and rouges, and pampers herself with luxury, and fritters away the little strength and energy she still possesses in absorbing herself with domestic details and the quarrels of her servants, and leaves her vast estates to take care of themselves. Considering the dangers with which both countries are menaced, the great difference which I observed between the Governments of the two countries is, that in one, government takes the form of active insanity—in the other, of drivelling imbecility. After all, there is always more hope for a young lunatic than an old idiot. We may pull through all right yet, but we shall have a very rough time to pass through first."

"And you think that we are too far gone ever to do so," I remarked, rather discouraged by the gloomy view he took of the present condition and future prospects of my native country."

"I don't altogether say that. It is not with countries as with individuals; the latter always pass from their second childhood into their graves. But for nations, who can say that there is not reserved a sec-

and youth? though history does not record an instance of any nation having ever attained to it. The process is probably a slow one; but in these days of rapid development, to say nothing of evolution, we cannot be sure even of that."

"Still," I pursued, a little nettled at the severity of his judgment in regard to my own country,—I did not care what he said about Russia, of which I was in no position to judge,—“I should like to know upon what grounds you base your opinion that England is an old idiot. The expression, I think, is scarcely parliamentary.”

“In using the term to which you object,” said Ivan,—“which, after reading the language recently used in debate in your House of Commons, I maintain is strictly parliamentary,—I was not so much alluding to England as to its Government; and I will endeavour to explain to you the reasons which lead me to think that the expression is not misapplied. There are at the present day, including the population of the United States, between eighty and ninety millions of people who owe their origin to the British Isles; who speak the English language as their mother-tongue; who possess in a more or less degree the national characteristics of the race from which they have sprung; who exercise an influence over a greater area of the surface of the earth than that of any other race upon it; who directly control over 250 millions of people not of their own race, and indirectly control many millions more; whose commercial relations are more extensive than those of all the other nations of the world put together; whose wealth is unrivalled; whose political institutions have hitherto served as a model, as they have been the envy of less favoured peoples; and who may be said,

without fear of contradiction, to lead the van of the world's civilisation. It is difficult, when we spread a map out before us, to realise that so small a dot as Great Britain appears upon it, should have given birth to these stupendous forces; and one is led to examine into the processes by which so marvellous a position has been achieved in the world's history as that which these small islands must occupy, even though that position seems now about to be destroyed by what appears to an outsider to be a combination of national decrepitude and administrative impotence,—for it is only when a nation has itself lost its vigour, that it tolerates imbecility on the part of its rulers. The greatness of England has been built up, not on the conquests of its neighbours, or of nations equally civilised with itself, as we have seen occur in the cases of other great empires, but in the comparatively easy subjugation of barbarous peoples; in the occupation and colonisation of countries sparingly inhabited by savage races; in the material development of vast tracts of the earth's surface; in the creation of new markets, of new sources alike of supply and of demand; and in the energetic and profitable employment of capital in all the regions of the earth. This was possible, and possible only because her adventurous sons who went forth into wild and distant regions to occupy, to develop, and to create, always felt that they had behind them a motherland whose proud boast it was that she ruled the waves, and a nation and Government so thoroughly animated by their own daring and adventurous spirit, that they knew that none were too humble or insignificant to be watched over and protected; nay, more, they were encouraged

in hardy enterprises, and often assisted to carry them out.

"During the last two or three years, the circumstances of my life, into which it is not necessary for me now to enter, have forced me not merely to circumnavigate the globe, but especially to visit those British possessions, and those seaboard lands still relative if barbarous, upon which your countrymen are so thickly dotted as merchants or settlers, and where British subjects of foreign race abound, who carry on their avocations under that British protection which used to be a reality, but is now only a name. Familiar as I have been with Englishmen from my youth, I found a spirit of bitter discontent rife, which, even among your grumbling race, was altogether a new feature in their conversation, especially with a foreigner. Many were making arrangements to close up their business and abandon the commerce in which they were engaged; some, and this was especially the case among the British subjects of foreign race, were taking steps to change their nationality. In some of the colonies the language held sounded to my Russian ears little short of high treason; while I often heard Englishmen in the society of foreigners say that they were ashamed to call themselves Englishmen—a sentiment which I do not remember ever having heard one of your countrymen give vent to in my youth.

"I only mention these as illustrations of the fact which was forcibly impressed upon me during my travels, that the influence of England was waning, not in Europe, where it *has* waned, but where it might be recovered by a vigorous stroke of policy,—but in Asia, Africa, and America—in those continents from which she

derives her position and her wealth. The waning of British influence in Europe means, comparatively, nothing, so far as British commerce is concerned. The waning of that influence in the three other continents means national decay. It has not been by her great wars, her European campaigns, that England has achieved greatness, but by her little ones in those distant countries which your Government seems ready to retire from, bag and baggage, at the first word of a new-comer; and yet one would suppose that nothing could be clearer to a people not in its dotage than this, that if they do not protect their merchants, the latter will not be able to compete with those who are protected. If you desire proof of this, look at the increasing substitution of German for English houses of commerce all over the world; and if commerce languishes, food becomes dearer for those very classes who cry out against those little wars which, when wisely turned to account, have proved your best national investments, and have been the indirect means of giving food and employment to your starving millions. I see that there is some talk of a committee being appointed to inquire into the causes of the depression of trade. Those causes are not very far to seek; or rather, in another sense, they are very far to seek. You must travel from China to Peru to find them, and they will stare you in the face. I have been watching, while you are squabbling over your Franchise and your Redistribution Bills, how your trade is slipping from you. So you go on fiddling on the two strings of your electoral fiddle, while Rome is burning. One would have supposed that England was old enough by this time to have discovered that it would not improve her

voters to give them another shuffle; that she had experience enough to know that electors were like playing-cards, the more you shuffle them the dirtier they get. With the interests of the empire at stake, certainly in two if not in three continents, you play the ostrich, and bury your heads in parish politics—parish politics of the most pestilent and useless description.

“Do you want to know why trade languishes? It is summed up in a short sentence: Want of confidence on the part of the trader; it cramps his enterprise, damps his ardour, spoils his temper, and crushes all the manliness out of him. The commercial stability of England was not built up by a lot of unprotected females, which is the condition the British merchant abroad is rapidly being reduced to by the neglect and apathy and indifference to his interests of his Government. He is perfectly well aware in every port where there is a consul, that he is considered a nuisance by that functionary, who knows that in the degree in which he prevents his complaints from reaching the department which is supposed to direct the foreign policy of England, will he be considered capable and efficient. No longer does he feel himself to be the *Civis Romanus* of old days. His sugar plantations may be destroyed in Madagascar, his commercial interests may be imperilled in China, he may be robbed and insulted in Turkey; but he is gradually being taught, by bitter experience, that it is hopeless to look to diplomatic interference for redress. Meanwhile the British taxpayer continues to pay for that expensive luxury whose function it is supposed to be to protect those commercial interests abroad upon which the prosperity and wealth of Great Britain depends. In like manner

the ties between the mother country and her colonies are weakened by her persistent shrinking from the responsibilities and obligations which the welfare and security of those colonies involve. She sacrifices ruthlessly that prestige upon the maintenance of which the safety, and in some cases the allegiance, of her subjects depends. She deludes unhappy colonists into making investments, and settlements in half-civilised States upon the faith of treaties, which she ignominiously shrinks from enforcing at the first appearance of danger, and calmly leaves her savage allies to be slaughtered and her colonists to be plundered, as in the case of South Africa; or she makes transparent display of her timidity and weakness, as has been conspicuously the case in her relation with her Australian possessions; or retreats from the protection of her natural frontiers, as she has lately done in India. And all this is in pursuance of a theory of political economy incomprehensible to the unprejudiced observer like myself, that it is cheaper and more advantageous to the national prosperity to sacrifice the commercial interests of the country than to incur the risks and expense of protecting them. The only explanation one can give of an infatuation so incredible, of a policy so short-sighted and so fraught with disaster, is, that it is based on ignorance—ignorance of the present injury that it is working, and ignorance of the dangers to which it is giving birth. There can be no surer way of precipitating the crisis which England seeks to avoid, and which, when it comes, must involve the utter ruin of her trade, than the invitation which her craven attitude offers to her covetous and unscrupulous neighbours, whether they be civilised or

uncivilised, to encroach to their own profit, until at last the veil which is now before the eyes of the public in England will be torn away, and they will find themselves suddenly called upon to abandon the parochial details over which they have been wrangling, for sterner work. It will be too late then to regret the penny-wise and pound-foolish policy which plunged them into the mess: the only question they will have to consider is, whether it is not too late to get out of it.

"I am a good deal surprised," I remarked, after having listened to the unflattering utterances of my friend with some dissatisfaction, "that you entirely ignore all other considerations than those of mere policy and expediency. Granting, as you say, that the present policy of England imperils its commercial ascendancy, are no other considerations to be allowed to guide the policy of a nation than those connected with its pocket? Have we no moral duties to perform, no example to set, no principles to maintain? Or are we ever to remain a nation of shopkeepers, fighting unscrupulously for markets; grabbing the territory of savages, under the pretext of civilising them, which is usually accomplished by the process of extermination; and jostling all other comers out of the markets of the world by fair means or foul? Because these means served us some centuries ago, and because, if you will, our national greatness is built upon them, does it follow that we should cling to them in these more enlightened days? If the moral instinct of the people of England begins to revolt against them, even to the prejudice of the national purse, do our money-bags constitute a sufficient reason why we should remain in the Cimmerian darkness and brutality of the

middle ages? Of all men you were the last whom I expected to hear confound moral progress with political imbecility."

"Nay," returned Ivan, "I should be the first to congratulate you on a policy of moral progress, if, in that pursued at present by England, I could discover it. What moral progress is there in a policy which has resulted in the slaughter of thousands of unhappy Arabs in Egypt and the Eastern Soudan? Where does moral progress show itself in the expedition which has worked its weary way into the heart of Africa, to fight against the naked savages there? Where is the moral progress of a policy which has necessitated another military expedition to South Africa, and new annexations of territory there? What moral progress have you achieved in Turkey, where you are bound by treaty to institute reforms in that part of the empire over which you are supposed by the same treaty to exercise a protectorate, the very existence of which, under the policy of moral progress, it has been found convenient to ignore, because it involves responsibilities towards an oppressed and suffering people, whose oppression and whose sufferings it would now be expensive and troublesome to recognise, though political capital enough is made out of them when the exigencies of your local party warfare demand it? The question is, In what does real moral progress consist? Certainly not in the blatant profession of moral platitudes—the abstract truth of which everybody recognises—when they are accompanied by a practice which gives them the lie direct. There can be nothing more demoralising to the moral welfare of a nation than a policy which is in flagrant contradiction to its lofty moral preten-

sions. Not only does it degrade the national conscience, but it renders that conscience an object of derision and contempt among foreign nations. To be logical and consistent, the politician 'who is in trouble about his soul' must follow one of two courses,—either he must recognise the fact that national egotism, like individual egotism, is a vice which admits of no compromise, and that the duty of his country is to love other countries better than itself; that the love of money, and therefore the making of it, is the root of all evil; that when the nation is metaphorically asked for its cloak, it should give its coat also—and when smitten on one cheek, should turn the other to the smiter;—when he is reluctantly convinced that, however desirable this higher law might be, and however indisputable its morality, it is, under the existing conditions of humanity, impracticable, then he has no alternative but to base the national policy upon the exactly opposite principle, which is that which governs the policy of all other nations, and assume that his duty consists in protecting the interests of his own country against those of rival countries, which are all engaged in an incessant competitive warfare against each other; and he will find, by experience, that any attempt to compromise with the opposite or altruistic principle will inevitably lead to disaster, for it will involve that hesitation and weakness in the conduct of affairs which will encourage those rivals to overt acts of offence and encroachment that must ultimately lead to bloody wars in defence of those national interests which a policy of vacillation and of moral inconsistency will have imperilled. Sooner or later, it is certain that the force of events will rip off the

thin veneering of cant which had served to delude the ignorant masses, and to conceal either the stupidity or the insincerity of its professors. I say stupidity, for there can be little doubt that among those who guide the destinies of the nation are many who honestly share the belief with the public they help to mislead, that to shrink from responsibilities, to temporise in the face of danger, to make sacrifices and concessions in order to conciliate, will avert catastrophies instead of precipitating them; while there are others to whose common-sense it would be an insult to make any such assumption."

"But these others," I observed, "may, without any insult to their common-sense, be supposed to entertain the opinion that the possessions of the British empire are sufficiently extended and difficult to protect, to render any further annexation of territory, or acquisition of responsibility, undesirable."

"Doubtless; and in this I agree with them. Indeed, the incapacity they have shown to protect what they have got, is the best reason they could assign for being unwilling to have more; but it does not touch the question of the principle upon which England's policy should be based in her dealings with foreign nations, and with her own colonial possessions; in other words, what are the most economical and at the same time the most moral methods of self-preservation? I put economy before morality, because, whatever may be the professions of Governments in practice, as a consideration, it always precedes it. If bloodguiltiness was not always attended with so much expense, people's consciences would be far less sensitive on the subject.

Hence it happens that highly moral financiers are apt to regard things as wicked in the degree in which they are costly, while they are too short-sighted as statesmen to perceive that a prompt expenditure is often the best way of saving a far heavier amount, which must be the result of the delay—or, in homely phraseology, that a stitch in time saves nine. The most economical and the most moral method of self-preservation, then, will be found in consolidating, protecting, and extending the commercial position and moral influence of the great English-speaking people in all quarters of the globe. At this moment, though surrounded by enemies who envy and hate her, there is no country more safe from attack than Germany, because she is governed by a statesman who never shirks responsibility, cowers before danger, or, in moments of difficulty, takes refuge in compromise or concession. It is not England, with her horror of war, that has, during the last decade, been the Power which has prevented a European war, otherwise inevitable, from breaking forth; the statesman to whom the peace of Europe has been due, upon whom that peace now depends, and who is therefore doing the most for the moral progress of Europe, is exactly that statesman who never indulges in moral platitudes, and whom his worst enemy cannot accuse of hypocrisy. No one will pretend that peace is not more conducive to economy and moral progress than war; but to secure it, a great military position and a great national prestige are alike indispensable. England has, or should have, the first naval position in the world, and, until lately, her national prestige was second to none. These advantages confer on her great responsibilities; to part with them is

to diminish her powers of usefulness in the world, and her mission of civilising it. As the champion of civil and religious liberty, she owes a duty to humanity, which it would be a crime alike in the eyes of God and man for her to relinquish, even though it may cost blood and treasure to maintain it,—for the amount expended to maintain it would be as nothing compared to the sacrifices of both life and money which the abandonment of this duty would entail upon the world. I speak feelingly, for I cannot conceive a greater disaster befall the human race, than to see the place of England usurped by the nation of which I have the honour of being a humble member,” here Ivan smiled bitterly. “So absorbed are you in your own vestry quarrels, that you either forget or are ignorant of the place you occupy in the regard of millions, who see in England the apostle of free thought, free speech, free institutions. Your standard, which we look up to as the flag of liberty, and which should be nailed to the mast, we watch you with dismay lowering to every piratical craft, while the crew are fighting about a distribution of provisions, and the pilot seems to prefer running his ship on the rocks to boldly facing the enemy’s cruisers. Nothing strikes us members of the oppressed and suppressed races as more anomalous and incomprehensible, than the fact that the party in England which are most ready to compromise the honour of that flag, and to haul it down on the least provocation, are precisely that party who are most loud-tongued in their profession of sympathy for those races to whom it is the banner on which their hopes are fixed—the symbol in their eyes of progress, civilisation, and political freedom. Hence it is that all

those among us who are not absolute anarchists, find ourselves unconsciously withdrawing our sympathies from that political party in your country, who, while they style themselves the party of progress and of advanced thought, are in reality compromising the cause which I feel sure they honestly cherish and believe in, by destroying the prestige and lowering the influence of the one European Power which is its great representative—and, to our own great wonderment, are beginning rather to pin our hopes for the future upon those whom we have hitherto considered reactionary, because they called themselves Conservative and aristocratic, but who, in this crisis of the fortunes of their country, resist a policy calculated to impair its supremacy. Thus, on a higher principle than that appealed to by the political moralists who direct the helm of State, may the best interests of morality be reconciled with those of their own country; for it is by maintaining the supremacy of England that the principle which is identified with her institutions, her traditions, and the aspirations of her people, can be best secured in the interests of that universal society of which she forms part, and towards which she undoubtedly has moral obligations and responsibilities. The party which seeks to evade them, whether upon specious theories started by *doctrinaires* ignorant of international conditions, or upon penny-wise and pound-foolish grounds of economy, are in reality the party of reaction; for they are the best allies of reactionists, and are playing into their hands, as no people have better reason for knowing than the Russians, who have observed with dismay the sympathy of your Prime Minister with ‘the

divine figure of the North,’ as he has styled our ruler, and his methods of government; while from our point of view, the party of progress in England, let them call themselves Conservative if they so please, are those who, true to the grand traditions of the country, are determined to keep it in the van of freedom, not merely because its wealth and prosperity are due to that absolute civil and political liberty which imposed no check upon individual enterprise or achievement, but because with the preservation of its greatness are bound up the most cherished interests of the human race.”

“Come, Ivan,” I said, laughing, “you have wound up with a peroration as much too flattering to my country as you were too uncomplimentary at the start. For an ‘old idiot,’ you have ended by giving her a pretty good character.”

“Not at all,” he rejoined; “I ended by describing her splendid position and advantages. I called her an old idiot for either being unconscious of them, or throwing them away consciously. And I ventured to add a word of encouragement to those who are struggling to prevent these being thrown away, and to assure them that, in their resistance to the short-sighted and fatuous policy of their present rulers, they have the cordial sympathy of philosophic Liberals like myself (I am not now speaking of Socialists and Nihilists, whose hands are against all parties) all over Europe. One of your own most eminent philosophers, himself a Liberal, has recently written a book, in which he has shown the danger by which the true principle of liberty is threatened from the reactionary tendencies of the democratic autoo-

racy. I merely wish to assure you that we in Europe are fully alive to this danger, and dread as much the despotism which springs from the divine right of mobs, as from that of kings. There is to my mind as little of God in the *vox populi* as in an Imperial ukase; and our only safety between these two extremes, which I should rather be disposed to call infernal than divine, lies in the common-sense, patriotism, and virtue of those statesmen, politicians, and lawyers who, holding a middle course between them, as being both equally dangerous to the principles of true liberty, endeavour not merely to preserve the institutions of that country which is the home of liberty, but, by maintaining its supremacy, enable it to resist attacks from whatever quarter."

"I have lived too much out of England for the greater part of my life," I remarked, "to be much of a party man; still, from early and family association, my sympathies rather incline towards that party which now control its policy, though I admit they have shown but indifferent foresight, skill, or judgment in grappling with the difficulties which they had to confront. Still it is only fair to them to remember that these were left them as a heritage by their predecessors; and that if they have blundered somewhat in the effort to set matters right—conspicuously in Egypt, for example—it was not they who set matters wrong in the first instance in that country."

"That I entirely deny," responded Ivan, "as I think I can prove to you in a very few words. But before doing so, allow me to express my surprise at your admission that, because you were a Liberal in the days of Lord Palmerston, who was pre-eminently the representative of the policy

which I have advocated as being that which should animate a British statesman, your sympathies should extend to those who, while they wear the old party livery, have entirely departed from the old party lines. His mantle has indeed fallen upon them, but they have so completely turned it inside out that it is no longer recognisable. In the days when a party existed which called itself 'Liberal-Conservative,' there was no violent political issues at home to check the current of a domestic legislation which was ever steadily progressive; while in foreign affairs the Government of the day, whether it was Conservative or Liberal, followed the well-established traditions of British policy abroad, which, if it had incurred the jealousy of European Powers, at all events commanded their admiration and respect. The utterly inconsistent and perplexing attitude which England has now assumed, so entirely at variance with the principles by which her foreign policy was formerly governed, must of necessity deprive her of all sympathy abroad, for she has proved herself totally untrustworthy as an ally—while all true Liberals must deplore the agitation which has resulted from a domestic legislation that has a tendency unnecessarily to exacerbate party feeling, and drive people into violently opposite extremes. Nothing is more fatal to all real progress than a wild and unreasoning rush in the direction in which it is supposed to lie, because the inevitable consequence is a reaction most probably equally unreasoning. Moreover, these violent swings of the political pendulum must always be attended with the greatest possible danger. A Conservative triumph which is purchased at the price of acts of folly, rashness, or weakness, perpetrated

by their opponents, is paid for by the country, and is but a sorry bargain. It is not under such violently disturbing influences that sound and healthy Liberal progress is made. And all history proves that the liberty which is born in convulsions invariably degenerates into a licence which culminates in a tyranny.

"And now one word in reply to your allusion to the present position of matters in Egypt, and more especially with regard to that legacy of disasters which the present Government maintain they have inherited from the policy of Lord Beaconsfield, and which, with characteristic weakness, they constantly invoke as an excuse for their own shortcomings. When the Anglo-French *condominium* was established in Egypt—which is regarded as the *fons et origo mali*—an *entente cordiale*, which was rapidly ripening into an alliance, had been formed between Germany, Austria, and England, in which, to a certain extent, Italy was included, and upon which Turkey depended for her existence; it formed, therefore, a combination of European Powers which controlled Europe, and was in a position to dictate, especially to Prussia and France, both weakened as those two Powers were by recent wars, and by internal dangers and dissensions—both being, moreover, the only Powers in Europe whose interests clashed with those of England in the East, and whose policy, therefore, it was the interest of England narrowly to watch, and, if need be, to control. The faculty of doing this had been wisely secured to her by the European combination in which she had entered, above alluded to. Under these circumstances she had nothing to fear in Egypt from an association with France in the

dual control. Practically it became a single control; for, with Germany and Austria at her back, England could dictate her own policy in Egypt, and, in the event of its not suiting her French associate, could even dare to enforce it without the slightest fear of the peace of Europe being endangered thereby. Her political supremacy in Egypt was, in fact, guaranteed to her by Germany and Austria, who had no reason to regard it with jealousy, while they obtained in return that commanding position which England's adhesion to their alliance secured them in Europe. So far, then, from having succeeded to a heritage of difficulty, the present Government succeeded to one of absolute security. But the whole aspect of the political chessboard was changed when the new player, who took over the game in the middle of it, removed the piece which gave check to king and queen, and which, if it was not moved away, rendered final victory a certainty. Lord Beaconsfield's policy in Egypt turned upon the Anglo-Germanic-Austrian Alliance. When, after his fall from office, this was rudely ruptured by insulting expressions of antipathy to Austria on the part of his successor, the effect of which subsequent expressions of apology were inadequate to efface—by a strongly marked coldness towards Germany, and a no less marked *rapprochement* towards France—the latter Power, relieved from the dread of the European combination, which had up to that moment held her quiescent in Egypt, jumped up like a jack-in-the-box, and favoured us with that series of intrigues which gave us Arabi, and the evils that followed in his train. Meantime, utterly isolated in Europe by that rupture with the most powerful friends in it,

with which the policy of Lord Beaconsfield had provided you, you found yourselves betrayed and deserted by the ally you had chosen instead of them ; while every concession you made to that ally, and every attempt at conciliation, only plunged you deeper in the mire, in which you have since been left to flounder alone, a laughing-stock and object of derision to all Europe, and more especially to those Powers who might have proved your salvation, but who have since entered into other European combinations from which England is excluded, and which may prove in the highest degree dangerous to her. No assertion, therefore, can be more utterly false in fact than the statement that the heritage to which this Government succeeded was one of trouble. So far from it, the policy of their predecessors had left them in a position of commanding strength ; and to lay the misfortunes which have since arisen at the door of those who had taken such precautions that they could never arise, is as though a general who should take over the command of an army placed strategically in an impregnable position, should abandon that position altogether, and after being defeated in the open field, find fault with the nature of the defences he had abandoned. But," added Ivan, with a yawn, stretching himself, looking at his watch, and going to the open window, "you will think that I have degenerated from the philosophical spectator into the keen party politician. This I was compelled to be during my recent visit to London, where you are nothing if you are not partisan. The flavour of Piccadilly clings to me still : how much more delicious are the odorous night airs of these southern climes ! Look up at those stars, my old friend, before you go to bed, and thank them that you have been spared the cares and the ambitions of the Treasury bench."

THE WATERS OF HERCULES.—PART VIII.

CHAPTER XXV.—THE STORY OF THE BROKEN HEART.

"I have unclaspt
To thee the book even of my secret soul."
—*Twelfth Night*.

GRETCHEN had to look again to make sure that it was indeed Dr Komers. Those were his features and his eyes, but they wore an expression which made him scarcely recognisable; the violence of physical movement and of mental emotion had driven the blood to his face and the fire to his eyes. He looked magnificently fierce, with his clenched white hands and the quick dilation of his fine-cut nostrils.

"Dr Komers!" cried Gretchen.

Even while she spoke, Dr Komers had let go the grasp on his adversary's throat, and had risen from his knees to his feet. He still breathed heavily; his coat was torn, and both his hat and spectacles had fallen off in the struggle.

The Roumanian doctor lay where he had fallen, giving not the smallest sign of life.

"Is he dead?" asked Gretchen, under her breath.

Vincenz bent over him.

"Only stunned, I think," and he undid the unfortunate Kokovics's collar and loosened his cravat. "Only stunned, and I daresay a good deal bruised."

The unfortunate Kokovics opened his eyes, and looked up drowsily into his enemy's face.

"Am I dead?" he inquired, in a feeble whisper.

"I hope not," said Vincenz. "Let us get you to your feet, and we shall see."

"What am I then," asked Kokovics, "if I am not killed?"

"Knocked down—that is all."

"Rather badly knocked down," murmured Kokovics, dreamily. "I have been knocked down before."

"I have no difficulty whatever in believing it," said Vincenz.

"But never quite as badly as this," finished Kokovics.

"Will you be so kind as to get to your feet? You can have my arm if you like."

Kokovics looked a little distrustfully at the arm.

"You will oblige me by making haste," said Vincenz; and the Roumanian struggled from the horizontal to the perpendicular.

He stood looking about him, a most piteous figure, with his long hair hanging over his eyes, and all his spirit crushed out of him.

Nobody spoke for a minute, while Dr Kokovics slowly gathered his senses together. Then he let go Vincenz's arm, and stooped to pick up his wide felt-hat.

"Those hands of yours are like iron hammers," he said sulkily, rubbing his bruised arms with an injured air. He crushed his hat on to his head, and turned to go up the gorge.

"Not quite so fast, if you please," interrupted Vincenz, speaking more in his usual tone. "You do not leave this spot until you have made an ample apology to this lady."

Perhaps it was the vivid recollection of the lawyer's iron fists which induced Dr Kokovics to

stand still when thus called upon. He pulled his hat further down on his forehead, and mumbled a few words of incoherent apology.

"Let me tell you too," said Vincenz, in a studiously quiet voice, "that if you ever again dare to address a single word of any sort to Fräulein Mohr, I shall denounce you as a blackguard and a villain; and at the first hint of impertinence, I shall thrash you before the eyes of anybody who will take the trouble to look on. Is that quite distinct to you?"

"Quite," muttered the Roumanian, quaking in his shoes.

Whatever harm the fall might have done to his constitution, it certainly had had the salutary effect of sobering him completely. All his blustering self-confidence of five minutes ago was vanished, leaving no trace behind it. They were of much the same stature, the Roumanian and the German, yet the short-sighted lawyer looked by far the grander man of the two.

Dr Kokovics seemed to have shrunk to half his size, as he turned and slunk away among the rocks, leaving his paper lamps abandoned to their fate. No red and blue lights will to-night rejoice the fifty learned men. Here the lamps will hang forgotten, until the rain has washed away the blue and red colour, and the wind has torn them to fragments.

Dr Kokovics waited until he had got one rock between him and his late enemy, and then, as a parting shot, he called back across this rampart—

"Good evening, valiant knight! No doubt you will now enjoy the favours which your confounded fists have taken away from me. The flower of beauty to the conqueror! Such are the fortunes of war!"

Vincenz clenched his hand and made a step forward, but the doctor was flitting away like a black ghost in a hurry; and he turned back with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders. Gretchen was leaning against a rock—her face very pale, and her lips twitching convulsively.

"I am afraid you have had a great fright," he said, looking at her anxiously.

"No, it is nothing," she managed to say with difficulty. She made a step forward, meaning to reassure him as to her strength, but stumbled and caught hold of the rock.

"I shall rest a minute," she said faintly. "I don't think I could walk just yet."

"Upon this stone, then," said Vincenz, as, with fingers as deft and delicate as those of a woman, he cleared off the loose sticks which encumbered the low rock beside her.

"Thank you," said Gretchen, as she sat down; she would have liked to say more, but she was not sure of her voice.

Dr Komers did not sit down; he stood some paces away from her, reflecting what else he could do for her comfort, for it was evident that she was both frightened and faint. He could hear her teeth chattering; and the thought that she might suddenly be taken ill terrified him beyond measure. The only woman he was intimately acquainted with, his sister Anna, had given him frequent and alarming examples of the frailty of the female constitution. His coat was the only available wrap, and taking it off, he put it over her knees and feet. "If you don't mind," he said, apologetically.

"Thank you," she said again; then after a pause, "How did you find me here?"

"Your brother came back without you," answered Vincenz, with a shade of embarrassment. "I thought I could overtake you and tell you of the mistake, for it was getting late. I walked as fast as I could; but apparently you must have walked faster, for I could not get up to you. When I came to the head of the gorge, I could hear the stones rolling further down, and I guessed you were on in advance. Did you not hear me shout?"

"Oh, then it was you who shouted?" said Gretchen, beginning to be ashamed of her groundless alarm.

"I am afraid that villain has frightened you most terribly," he added, looking down at her with a concern that was more that of a father than of a lover.

Gretchen tried to smile. "I think you frightened me also a little."

"I frightened you!" he repeated, in a tone of the blankest consternation. "Is that possible?"

Looking at him at this moment, it did seem scarcely possible to Gretchen herself. He had quite resumed his ordinary manner—his voice and his look were gentle, almost timid.

The hands which had dealt such crushing blows a few minutes ago, with what tender care had they arranged the seat for her, and placed the coat over her feet! And yet neither in the tone nor words was there the shadow of anything which could have alarmed the most sensitive delicacy. They were alone here in this wild solitude, and she knew that this man loved her; but she knew also, with as firm a conviction, that she was as safe as if her father had been by her side. This time it was not by any process of logical deduction that she reached this conclusion; the con-

viction sprang only from an unreasoning but not a mistaken instinct.

"Did I really frighten you?" asked Vincenz, anxiously.

The flush of movement was still on his face; and though he was calm again outwardly, the strong effort he made could not succeed in suppressing his inward excitement. A man does not pass fifteen years at desk drudgery, and then find himself suddenly plunged into a hand-to-hand fight, without feeling his whole nature stirred up by it. The strength which had so long lain dormant and useless had found a subject on which to wreak itself, and instinct had told him how to use his advantages.

"You would have been frightened at yourself, if you could have seen your own face," said Gretchen.

"I am not at all sorry that I knocked him down," said Vincenz, simply; "but I am sorry I could not have knocked him down more quietly. I am afraid"—with growing anxiety—"that I must have used some rather strong language."

"Rather," said Gretchen, smiling. "I thought you were going to throw him over the rock at one moment."

Vincenz looked grave.

"I believe I was. If you had not screamed then, I should have had Dr Kokovics on my conscience. I scarcely knew what I was doing. I felt rather wild just then. I see now that it must have frightened you terribly. Can you forgive me?"

"Oh! it is you who should forgive me," said Gretchen, catching her breath.

Dr Komers made no answer, but turned and walked a few steps away. His back was towards her, and to all appearance he seemed absorbed in the contemplation of a clump of trampled fern. The green tufts of

hart's-tongue had suffered grievously in the struggle: the broken fronds lay crushed on the ground, all their juicy life stamped out of them in that brief but furious fight. It would be long before they raised their heads again.

There was a silence of some minutes. The last of the daylight was dying fast; the black stone-pines frowned down from their high seats; there was not a sound in the lonely gorge. Overhead the evening stars were beginning slowly to shine; and, as though the valley had been a lake which sent back the image of each star in the sky, the lights below sprung up one by one.

Gretchen sat on the stone with her hands clasped before her. Her heart beat fast; but it was not with fright now—it was with a sort of nervous expectation. What was Dr Komers going to say next? Was he going to tell her again that he loved her? Ah no! that was to be never again. She had forgotten that,—never again!

"Fräulein Mohr," said Dr Komers, coming back towards her, "it is no wonder that I frightened you to-day; the wonder is rather that I should not have frightened you long ago. Perhaps you have never guessed that I am a passionate man?"

"I have thought so—once before."

Though it was so dark, she blushed crimson; for she was thinking of the scene on the morrow of the Cursalon ball.

"I understand," he said, calmly. "Well, since you have seen me on that day and on this, I had better tell you at once that my temper has been my ruin. It is entirely through an act of passion that I have shipwrecked my sister's life and my own."

He hesitated for a moment be-

fore going on. "Perhaps, if it would not weary you too much, I should like to tell you the story of that day. I have not told it to any one yet; but I think you could forgive me better for my occasional violence if you heard the rest. May I tell it to you?"

"Yes, yes; oh, please tell it me!" she said, with an eagerness which surprised him.

"It must be the story of the broken heart that he is going to tell me," thought Gretchen.

Ever since the day of her last passage of arms with Anna Komers, an illogical curiosity had possessed her with regard to that broken heart.

"Please begin," she felt inclined to say. She was as anxious as a child who has been promised a new fairy tale, and half expected the story to start with "Once upon a time."

"Thank you," said Vincenz, as if she had conferred a favour on him. "But it would be imprudent to stay here longer. I will tell you as we walk home. Would you mind making use of my arm to get back through the gorge?"

Gretchen felt stronger now, and rising to her feet, she took the arm which Vincenz almost diffidently offered her. As long as they were clambering up the torrent-bed, there was no possibility of conversation; each difficulty was increased tenfold by the darkness. There were gloomy shadows and sharp rustles all around; but Gretchen never started once. She wondered at the strength of her own nerves. Even if the robber-band had sprung out upon them, she felt as if she could have faced them coolly now. The proofs of strength which Dr Komers had given could not fail to reassure the most timid of female minds. As they passed the circular basin, where in early spring the

melted snow expands to a deep and whirling pool, the eagle put its head out of the nest above them, and expressed its displeasure at this further intrusion. It had been an evening of abnormal disturbance in the experience of this lonely eagle. When they had gained the level path, Vincenz spoke again—

“It is a very short story I have to tell, and very simple—most despairingly simple it has proved for both Anna and me. I need not tell you that I am a poor man—for I have never concealed my poverty,” said Vincenz, with an effort; “but I have not always been poor. My father was rich: until she was past twenty, Anna did not know what it was to have a wish unfulfilled. It was not long after her twentieth birthday that my father lost his fortune. It is no use troubling you with details, which at the time I did not thoroughly understand myself; the practical fact of finding that we were beggars was quite sufficient for all intents and purposes. My father’s death followed soon upon the crash; Anna and I were left to manage for ourselves. Our case was not by any means desperate. In his better days, my father had had many firm friends: they did not prove themselves quite so firm in the time of misfortune; but one at least, a Count Perlenberg, occupying a high ministerial position, did not immediately turn his back upon us. He generously offered me a position which opened to me the possibility of a brilliant diplomatic career. The prospect so delighted me, that in my eyes it more than made up for the loss of fortune. I worked hard for two years, drawing so high a salary that Anna could live in ease, almost in luxury.

“Count Perlenberg had one son, a fair-haired, pink-cheeked young man. I thought him a coxcomb

then, God forgive me! With what patience would I bear his coxcombry now, if I could see Conrad Perlenberg before my eyes! All this happened in Vienna, you must know. But for some months I was absent on an official mission. It was the first lengthy separation which had ever taken place between Anna and me. When I met Anna again on my return, it struck me for the first time that my sister was pretty; there was a new bloom on her face, a happier smile on her lips, a brighter light in her eyes. She had never looked like this before, and I did not know how to explain this change.

“It was only now that I made the acquaintance of young Perlenberg. He did not occupy any recognized position in his father’s office, and I was not even aware that he gave himself the show of authority.

“One morning soon after my return, on reaching the office at the usual hour I found lying on my desk the draft of an official report of some importance, whose composition had been entrusted to me, and which I had framed with particular care. It was being returned to me now, with corrections, written in an unknown hand, and evidently proceeding from some inexperienced person. Half of what I had written was stroked through, and there were remarks substituted, which displayed almost ludicrously the writer’s ignorance. I never was very patient of correction; the sight of my draft, on which I had spent such scrupulous care, now thus ignominiously returned upon my hands, roused my anger on the instant. I might have borne it better if I had been alone, but the harmless chaffing of my companions stung me to the quick. I knew that I was right, and that my unknown corrector was wrong.

I was very young and very hot-headed, and the sense of the injustice overpowered me as an unbearable insult.

“‘The man who has written this is a fool!’ I said aloud, and flung the paper to the floor.

“‘You will not dare to call *me* a fool,’ said a small voice; and through the open doorway Conrad Perlenberg suddenly stepped forward, looking rather more white than pink this morning. We stood opposite to each other, and the young counts and barons around tittered a little as they bent over their desks. I had not expected to see Count Perlenberg; but my blood was up, beyond all powers of restraint.

“‘I cannot take back my words,’ I said, ‘even if you have written it.’

“Young Perlenberg uttered a laugh, which was half embarrassed and half hysterical.

“‘This is suitable language,’ he said, turning to his companions, with an unsteady sneer — ‘most suitable language for a man who, but for my father, might be in want of breakfast to-day—’

“I am convinced now that Perlenberg had lost his self-control as much as I had lost mine, for he was not a bad fellow by nature; but at the moment I felt only the taunt, and it maddened me. I don’t remember making any answer; I know only that in the next moment the tittering at the desks had entirely ceased. I had struck out my right hand, and Conrad Perlenberg was lying on his back on the ground, while the rest of the *jeunesse dorée* were dragging me back by the arms and shoulders. They might have left me alone; for at the very moment of the fall I was already repenting having knocked down a man who was six inches below my own height.”

Gretchen could not repress a rising laugh, as the picture of the prostrate Perlenberg rose before her mind’s eye. Vincenz looked at her gravely.

“Does it amuse you? I daresay it was comedy to the spectators, but it turned out tragedy for us two. As soon as we had both recovered our senses, we were told that we must fight, and with pistols, as the offence had been so grave, and given before witnesses. No personal enmity was at fault. It had been entirely through a mistake that young Perlenberg had got hold of this document, and he had corrected it without knowing whose draft it was, while I had spoken unaware of the name of my corrector. But, for a hot word and a hasty act, the world decreed that each should have a shot at the other’s life. I had never fought a duel before, and I was foolish enough to be rather pleased at the prospect. I took care that Anna should not guess why I left the house at so early an hour. Perlenberg had the first shot, being the offended; he aimed fairly well, and hit me in the left arm. I felt a stinging pain, but the excitement drowned every bodily sensation.

“After I had fired, which I did in absolute blindness, for I could not see six paces ahead, the young Count stood upright for a moment, then staggered, and was caught in the arms of his second. He was not dead, but he was mortally wounded. He was privately removed to his house, and I went home, chilled and sobered; and at the door I was met by Anna, who had suspected something abnormal. I could not command my emotion; and my wounded arm, which I had half forgotten, spoke for itself. Some hint dropped by a servant led her to think of a duel, and she knew me too well to believe such

a thing unlikely. She insisted on binding up my arm, which still bled. I let her do it; but as I watched her preparing the bandages with such sorrowful anxiety, I felt a great discouragement come over me. 'I have done worse for him than that,' I said, gloomily. 'They tell me he can scarcely live.'

"Anna looked at me with scared eyes.

"'Who is he?' she asked. 'You must tell me, Vincenz.'

"'It is Conrad Perlenberg,' I said.

"I shall never forget the look which Anna gave me, and the cry which she uttered; it was the death-knell of her youth. The bandage she was holding dropped out of her hands, and she fell fainting on to the chair beside her. It was long before she came to her senses, and then I learned the whole truth. She had loved Conrad Perlenberg, whose acquaintance she had made in my absence, and only a few days ago they had become secretly engaged. It was the first secret she had ever kept from me; and, by heavens, the innocent mystery cost her dear! God knows what she can have seen in that pink-and-white face which made her love him! But I have found since then that those are the sort of men who know how to catch a woman's fancy." How bitter sounded the sigh which went along with these words!

"There followed a fearful week," said Vincenz, continuing his story. "From the very day of the catastrophe, Anna fell into a dreadful illness. I was half distracted; every moment that I could spare from my sister I stole away and stood in the unfrequented street, where straw had been laid down before one gloomy house, watching the window of the room where

Conrad lingered between life and death. It was winter, but I passed half the night at my post, wrapped in my cloak, and with my eyes on the light of that sick-room. On the eighth day I came there early, and, looking up as usual, I saw that both windows were flung wide open. It was a bitterly cold January day, and those open windows could mean but one thing."

His voice shook for a moment, and he broke off abruptly. They had come to a rough part of the pathway, and as Vincenz put out his hand as a support, Gretchen fancied it was not as steady as usual. She stole a glance up into his face, and saw the painful emotion which had been called up by that recollection.

"You should not have told me this," she whispered; "it pains you."

He looked down at her quickly, and then dropped her hand.

"It does pain me; but what matters the pain? I should like you to know it all. People have sometimes been kind enough to call me a quiet, sensible man: there is no great merit in being sensible after that one experience I have had. From that fatal day in the office, Anna's life and mine were violently transformed. I sent in my resignation myself, but I had one more short interview with Conrad's father. For the sake of his old friend's memory, Count Perlenberg declined to prosecute me, for the fatal termination of the duel brought me within reach of the law. 'But it could not give back my Conrad,' he said to me, sorrowfully. I might go where I liked, only I was never to come under his eyes again. So we went, Anna and I, like a pair of outcasts: we left Vienna, and quietly vanished out of the circles of the capital. Anna remained an invalid from

the day of her recovery. Every trace of youth and bloom was swept away by that illness. She never had been beautiful ; she had scarcely been pretty, except during that short period of happiness which I had destroyed. Conrad Perlenberg's love was the sun which had made her beauty bloom, and my violence was the frost which killed it. I asked her forgiveness on my knees, and she gave it me at once : she had always idolised me since my babyhood, and her affection was not by one whit weakened after the catastrophe. We began life again at the beginning. I worked for Anna, and, thank God, I was able to keep her from starving. It was the least I could do, after all."

Vincenz paused again. He had told the facts plainly, without adding a comment ; but the very bareness of the statement, given in that deeply tremulous voice, made it the more impressive. He said no word of the bitter desolation, the agony of self-reproach, which had been lived through, and which yet had to be lived down and thrust under in the battle for life on which he had then entered. A man cast in a sterner or a more callous mould would have more quickly shaken off that ghastly impression ; for, after all, he had not overstepped the recognised code of honour which society had set up. But Vincenz was not of that iron hardness. His mind was too keenly sensitive, too intellectually refined, to be so easily quit of that haunting memory. The world's code of honour shrank into nothing beside the accusation of his own conscience. No one, not even Anna, had ever guessed at the moments of discouragement and self-disgust which had threatened to overpower him. For a nature like his to suppress that gnawing remorse,

and to rise to the emergency of the moment was an effort almost heroic. He had no leisure for lamentation and sterile regrets, no opportunities for indulging in self-accusing tears ; even sackcloth and ashes were luxuries which he could ill afford. Stern moralists might condemn him to do penance ; but how of the poor penitent who has no money to buy the sackcloth, and no time to collect the ashes ?

Vincenz was forced to act at once, and to enter the lists in the vulgar battle for bare life. He had fought that battle bravely, and he had fought it alone ; for Anna, successfully deceived as to the extent of their poverty, had never attempted to contribute her share of labour. She continued to bully and adore her brother now as before, never by a single word of reproach hinting at the happiness which she had lost through his fault. She knew he worked, but she did not know how hard he worked ; and never to this day did she suspect how Vincenz used to sit with locked door, writing all night at his desk, so as to get through double work ; nor how often, when he declared he was going to dine with a friend, and she scolded him in her querulous fashion for his dissipation, he would walk the streets alone, and come back looking rather pale ; and all this only to lessen the butcher's bill, which he knew they could not pay.

Vincenz did not in any word refer to those past years ; but some dim reflection of what must have been, could not fail to dawn in Gretchen's mind.

They had walked for some minutes in silence, when Vincenz, more in his ordinary voice, said—

"That is the whole of my story. I have not often indulged in a passion since then ; a temper is a luxury which a poor man cannot afford

to keep. That one fit of anger was an expensive thing," and he laughed bitterly; "it cost my sister's happiness, Conrad Perlenberg's life, and my own career."

"I am glad you told me," said Gretchen, faltering. She could think of nothing else to say. "You must have been very unhappy."

"Others must have been more unhappy," he said quietly. "Having spoiled three people's lives, I have no right to expect any happiness in my own. I was fool enough

to expect it once, and I have been punished for it."

The last words were but a thought spoken aloud, and Gretchen dropped her head without answering.

They were in the valley by this time, and the blaze of the festive lights shone out close before them. But the story of the broken heart had left behind it a gloom not to be dispelled by lights or music, and the last few minutes of the walk were passed in unbroken silence.

CHAPTER XXVI.—A SULTANA.

"Ich bin ein Cavalier wie andere Cavaliere."

—*Faust.*

Princess Tryphosa is spending the evening in her apartment. On a low ottoman against the wall she reclines with half closed eyes.

The Recsulescos occupy the most magnificent suite of rooms of the monster hotel, and Princess Tryphosa inhabits the most magnificent room of this apartment. To European ideas it would appear a comfortless room; but there is plenty of rich, red velvet, and luminous gildings on all sides; and every touch of colour in the room, every light and every shadow, seems to be there expressly in order to throw out in relief the figure of that woman on the ottoman.

An ideal sultana, stepped straight out of the 'Arabian Nights,' she leans motionless among her yielding cushions. A rich and luxurious indolence is expressed in every curve of her reclining figure. There is a narcotic influence about her very presence; it hangs round her in the atmosphere, as impalpable, yet as irresistible, as a fragrance of poppy-heads. She is a silent protest against activity—a silent sermon on the beauty of laziness.

She is elaborately, almost gorgeously dressed; coloured stones shine upon her neck and arms, which the hanging sleeves leave bare; in her hair one red pomegranate-blossom droops, and on her cheek the black eyelashes throw a broad shadow.

The lamps have been lighted already, and pour all around them a flood of soft yellow. The summer evenings are beginning to creep in, though the days are still hot and sunny.

By the lamplight, Princess Tryphosa might be thought asleep; but she is not. There is a rosary of amber beads in her hand, and it glides slowly, very slowly, through her fingers. Beside her lies open one of Paul de Kock's most doubtful novels. The novel is no doubt intended to enliven the pauses between the lengthy prayers, and the amber beads are as certainly meant to nullify any bad effect of the entertaining lecture. Paul de Kock entertained this Roumanian Princess very much, but not as he entertains other people. While she read him (and she read him very conscientiously),

her face remained grave and her fancy untickled; she might have been believed utterly incapable of any sense of the ludicrous. That was entirely a mistake. Princess Tryphosa appreciated each joke, but she usually appreciated it a little time after she had laid down the novel. While the amber beads were gliding through her fingers, and her lips slowly moving in devotion, it often happened that the point of a joke she had been reading half an hour before, began to dawn in her mind, and made an irresistible smile rise to her moving lips. It was not at all unfrequent to hear Princess Tryphosa break into a low soft laugh, when the last half-hour had brought absolutely nothing calculated to raise merriment.

This evening she is not alone. There is a piano in the room, and at the piano a swarthy-faced girl, her younger sister, is touching the chords with an unskilful hand. The music is the only thing which disturbs the oriental character of the picture. A Moorish serenade, or the slumber-song of the 'Africaine,' would have been in harmony with the rest; but these jingly variations upon "*la prière d'une vierge*" are an element foreign to the scene. Princess Tryphosa feels them to be tiresome; at least she is fully aware that something is very tiresome, although she does not attempt to analyse the precise cause.

The variations had gone on for some time, when the Princess drew out her watch and looked at it. It was a beautifully enamelled watch, but it was not going.

"What o'clock is it, Milena?" she inquired, raising her voice.

The "*prière d'une vierge*" was suspended for a moment, while Milena answered, "Half-past eight." She put her hands on the chords again while she added, "You have

asked the hour twice, Tryphosa; do you want to go to bed? Are you tired?"

The variations went on for another half-page, and then Tryphosa's voice was heard answering—

"No, I don't want to go to bed. But I think I am rather tired," she said, lower.

The jingly prayer rambled on, causing Milena's two little brown hands to chase each other up and down the piano, and sometimes to jump clean over each other, like a couple of frisky brown mice at play. Some sound, like a heavy sigh, came from the ottoman by the wall. At the same time the door opened, and the black eyelashes were slowly raised. But it was not the person expected; it was only a tiny figure running towards her.

"*Mille pardons, madame,*" ejaculated the French nursery-maid behind, apologising for the abnormal intrusion; "*mais il est d'une méchanceté ce soir!*" He would insist on saying good-night to you, *madame, et je n'ai pu l'attraper, le petit coquin.*"

The small runaway meanwhile had clambered on to the ottoman, and thrown himself upon his mother's neck; while Princess Tryphosa passively submitted to this strange fancy of her son's. Perhaps she had not immediately realised the meaning of his appearance, for just as the indignant Fanchette had got him as far as the door, the Princess called him back to her side. She drew him towards her, and looked for a minute into his face, then pressed him once, almost with vehemence, to her breast; after which she sank back exhausted, dismissing Fanchette and her charge with a wave of her hand.

It was not more than once a week that such a scene of affection

took place between the mother and the son ; and yet Tryphosa was more devoted than most Roumanian mothers. It had not been all at once that she had taken the little brown-faced baby to her heart, nor indeed that she had discovered herself to be possessed of a mother's heart. Codran had almost kicked himself free of his swaddling-clothes by the time that Tryphosa had, somewhat to her surprise, awakened to the fact that she really was a mother like other women, and that she really loved her child as other women do. Now the curly-headed Codran was, for her, second to only one person in the world. In a moment of danger she might have had the devotion to sacrifice herself for her child, only that the chances are she would not have thought of it in time.

The little brown mice were beginning again to scamper over the keys, but had to break off their gambols as the door opened for the second time.

The Virgin's prayer came to a final close at last ; and Tryphosa, looking up, saw her sister rising from her seat, and curtsying sedately to the entering visitor.

The visitor was István Tolnay. He bowed with excessive respect to Milena, and then, advancing towards the ottoman, took Princess Tryphosa's outstretched hand and raised it to his lips. The amber rosary and the French novel were both put aside. Princess Tryphosa had more absorbing interests at this moment than prayers or novels.

Milena sat down demurely ; her sister looked at her steadily for a few moments, as if meditating how to get rid of her.

"I am glad you stopped playing, Milena," she remarked now ; "that air was so tiresome."

"Why did you not tell me before?" asked Milena.

"I did not think of it before."

"But you patronise music, Princess," said István, taking a place on a chair not very far distant from the ottoman.

The Princess looked at him, but spoke to her sister. "Milena, will you say that the *dulcetta* is to be brought in?"

When Milena had reached the door, which Baron Tolnay held open for her, the Princess added, "Georgin is to bring it."

Milena understood that she was not to return ; and she understood also quite well why she was not to return, although she walked out of the room as demurely as any strait-laced English damsel could have done. What Milena was, Tryphosa had been ; and what Tryphosa was, Milena would be in time, barring her beauty, which this swarthy-faced girl could never hope to rival. Before she had married, Tryphosa had scarcely known what the outside of a French novel was like ; would have considered herself insulted if a man had offered to shake hands with her ; had never been allowed to smoke a cigarette, or to cross a street except under the maternal eye. And now,—well, now she is alone with István Tolnay. What is there passing between István and Tryphosa?

With the closing of the door the mask was dropped. Milena's presence had of necessity made the first few phrases strictly conventional ; but it was not for the sake of conventional conversation that István was here this evening.

"I wrote to you," said Tryphosa, not changing her position, only turning her head slowly till her eyes rested on him. "Did you not get my note?"

"I am here in obedience to it,"

said István, sitting down again, this time on a chair much nearer to the ottoman. He looked at Tryphosa with unveiled admiration in his eyes: she lay still in her half-reclining position, while with one hand she drew towards her a scented box, and began turning a cigarette between her fingers.

"I said eight o'clock."

"I was not back at eight o'clock."

The Princess went on turning her cigarette calmly.

"Why do you always call me Princess now? You used to call me Tryphosa last summer."

István winced for an instant, but in the next he laughed gaily.

"How could I know that you still allowed it this year? I shall only be too happy to call you Tryphosa again."

She appeared not to be listening to his excuse: the cigarette was done turning, but she held it unlighted in her fingers, while her eyes hung on his face, as if she were maturing a thought in her mind.

"Where were you not back from at eight o'clock?"

"I took a long walk," said István, evasively.

"But not alone," said Tryphosa, with a rapidity which in her was surprising.

István pulled meditatively at his moustache. Of course he had not been alone; but he had thought that it might have been pleasanter for all parties if the fact had remained unmentioned. He would cheerfully have told a dozen lies on the subject, if that could have done any good, for no squeamish sensitiveness as to veracity ever troubled István Tolnay. If he candidly acknowledged the truth now, it was only because he recognised that denial would do no good.

"Alone?" He laughed. "No; I enjoy my own society best in that of other people. I made an expedition with Mr Howard and the Mohr family. We had quite a pleasant day," he added frankly, not shrinking in the least before Tryphosa's steady gaze. Moral cowardice did not happen to be his special phase of weakness.

The cigarette was lit by this time, and a soft cloud of grey-white smoke hovered around Princess Tryphosa's head.

"Why should you fancy that I would not allow you to call me Tryphosa this year, if I allowed it you last year?"

István had hoped that that subject was dropped by this time. He began framing an answer, when a welcome interruption came in the shape of a cut-glass plate filled with *dulcétia*, which just now was carried in by the servant. Never before had he so thoroughly appreciated this oriental custom. This break in the conversation would enable a fresh subject to be started at a very convenient juncture.

But he might have known Princess Tryphosa better by this time. The slow but unfailing tenacity of her mind was not to be disturbed by such an interruption. Three lengthy meals in the interval would not have been enough for that purpose; at the end of twenty-four hours she would have resumed the idea exactly at the place where she had dropped it. What effect could the appearance of the *dulcétia* have upon such a mind as hers?

When the glass plate was on the table and the door closed again, she spoke—

"I want you to tell me, István, what reason you have for supposing that anything is different from what it was last year?"

"Nothing is different," said István, leaning forward, and following only the impulse of the moment as he spoke.

"If anything is different," she said, letting a puff of smoke escape from her lips, "it is you who have made it different, and not I; it is your doing, and not mine."

"Have I made it different?"

István leant forward a little more. He did not say anything further at the moment, for he felt that the language of his eyes was the most appropriate language just then. He knew that his tongue spoke well when he chose, but he knew that his eyes spoke better; it was always with them that he got over the most difficult turns in conversation.

"It is you, it is not I," she said, without lowering her eyelids under his gaze. "István, you are not what you were last year. You do not come to me; you go on expeditions; you do not call me Tryphosa. You loved me last year——"

"And I love you this year," said István, taking her hand, which hung close to him. It was by far the most convenient answer to make, although it did not happen to be the true one. Besides being convenient, it was also pleasant. Though he did not love her this year, he had loved her last year; and the memory of that impression was quite vivid enough to make him enjoy the sight of her beauty, as she reclined thus with her eyes on his face. There was a deep colour glowing on her cheeks and burning on her lips; and this reflection of an inward passion, brooding deep down within her, made her surpassingly beautiful. In spite of many untoward circumstances, this moment was to be counted among the pleasant moments of his life. Though he did

not love her this year, there was no objection to letting himself be loved by her.

After his last words, she let her eyes sink deep into his for a moment; then slowly drawing away her hand, she calmly swallowed a spoonful of the *dulcètia*. Her next remark sounded irrelevant. It was always difficult to trace the embers of thought which might be smouldering in her mind.

"Mademoiselle Mohr is very beautiful."

István Tolnay started, and his eyes flashed fire. Tryphosa's image faded, and Gretchen's arose in its place. Quick as lightning his thoughts carried him to other scenes than this; to many a pleasant moment in the forest walk to-day; to many a word and look exchanged in the shadow of the beech-trees. Princess Tryphosa knew that that flush and that spark in his eye were not for her, even though he answered—

"You are more beautiful, my dark queen!"

"I think I am jealous of Mademoiselle Mohr," said Tryphosa, slowly.

She knew that she was much more beautiful than Gretchen, but she knew quite well what advantages the other had over her.

"It is no good being beautiful if I have lost your love."

"Have I not told you a hundred times that I love you?" asked István, with a shade of impatience this time. A woman's love was pleasant to him, but a woman's lamentations were wearisome.

Oh yes, he had told her that he loved her a hundred times, in hot and passionate words, last year: these words he said now, sounded so weak beside the memory of those others; and Princess Tryphosa's memory was unfortunately so tenacious.

"István, after all the sacrifices I have made, you cannot have forgotten your promises. You told me last year that I must wait. I have been patient, and I have waited. I have lived only on the thought of you, on the hope of being your wife some day. I have given up everything. I have risked my fair fame. I have deprived my child of its father—and all, all for you. Are you going to tell me that I have done it all in vain?"

She uttered these words, so full of passion, slowly, pausing often, and giving full weight to each syllable. As she spoke, she sat up from her reclining posture; the lamplight struck red and green flashes from the rubies and emeralds on her neck.

"I have not repented one sacrifice of all those which I have made. You are not going to abandon me, now that I am free?"

"Stop this talk, in God's name!" cried István, starting up from his chair with a fierce flush on his forehead. "Do you want to hunt me down? Do you want to drive me to distraction? A man's patience can be tried too far, I tell you."

This woman's lamentations were becoming decidedly inconvenient. They required to be cut short at any price. She trembled under the glance which he shot towards her; and, womanlike, she began to undo what she had been doing.

For more than a minute she sat collecting her thoughts; then she spoke—

"Forgive me, István,—I have been wrong; you must be right. I was wrong to doubt you."

Did not even this confidence touch him with pity, or awaken some faint qualm of conscience? No; for there is a sort of cruelty which springs, not from the pleasure of seeing others suffer, but only from a sort of mental instability;

and in this way István could be cruel. The cruelty which springs from hardness of nature has more chance of being softened than that which comes from a lightness of nature—for a hard nature need not necessarily be a shallow one; while here there was no possibility of stirring the depths, because the depths themselves were wanting. Therefore István was capable of fiery, though not of lastingly tender passions, and the impression of the moment, though paramount while it lasted, was swept away by the impression of the next. A woman's beauty was the only language which could make him feel an approach to pity. Passionate appeal and heartrending prayers fell upon indifferent ears: but sighs could move him—when they were breathed by glowing lips; and tears could touch him—falling from beautiful eyes.

Tryphosa's beauty had lost almost the last vestige of power over him, for he was surfeited with it. There was too much of it, and it was given too profusely; the quality was too rich, and the flavour too intense. Once he had wished for her love ardently; but now that she had freed herself and laid it at his feet, he felt his ardour strangely cooled. The coveted good lost half its value when thus pressed upon him.

He had thought that the last vestige of that power was gone; but he would not have been István Tolnay if the sight of that beautiful pleading figure had not calmed his anger, though it could not touch his pity. Her hands were clasped and raised towards him; diamond-drops glistened in her beseeching eyes, shining brighter than the fire of the jewels on her neck and arms. She was too beautiful to be resisted,—not too eloquent or too loving, or too blindly de-

voted, but simply too beautiful. Whether he loved her or not, and whether he meant to marry her or not, the thing most natural and most agreeable at this moment was to stoop and kiss her; and István did it. There really was no other way of quieting her suspicions. It was not a necessity, of course—it was a luxury; but István had not the heart to deny himself this luxury. Make it all the harder for her afterwards? Bah! István never thought of afterwards; that was a word which did not exist in his vocabulary. “*Après moi, le déluge*,” he thought, quite gaily, as he allowed himself to be drawn down on the seat beside her. His arm was round her now, and his voice was pouring sweet promises into her ear. Even at this moment he could scarcely be described as hypocritical. He was only taking what he liked second best, because he could not get what he liked best; he was only doing the thing most agreeable to be done at the moment. Was it his fault that he had found something else more agreeable a little time before, and might find it so again a little time after?

“And you will stay with me, István?” she murmured—and what a depth of tenderness shone in those velvety black eyes as she said it! Then after a moment—

“You will not go on any more of those expeditions in the mountains, where I cannot go?”

“Not if I can help it,” said István, readily. “I only do it for the sake of that poor old gentleman who is so anxious about discovering that place.”

Princess Tryphosa appeared to be ruminating upon this side of the question, but the result of her reflections was to make her repeat a remark which she had made once previously—

“Mademoiselle Mohr is very beautiful.”

“As pretty as a fair-haired woman can ever be,” said István unflinchingly, pressing his lips again to the soft hand he held. “Could you suspect me of the bad taste of preferring her to you?” The effrontery with which he put the question was admirable of its kind.

The Princess did not answer; she was too much in arrears for that. Her straight black brows were drawn together in deep thought.

“And you will go on no more expeditions, if you can help it; and you will come and see me often—for I must be your wife soon, István.”

She turned and looked straight at him; and though those deep eyes moved so slowly, the flush which shot over his face did not escape her sight.

“We must wait, Tryphosa,” he said, in his softest voice. “I told you that we must wait.”

“And you say that you prefer me to her,” she continued, slowly. “How long must we wait?”

It was István’s conviction that the Princess would have to wait much longer than she imagined; but he kept that conviction to himself.

“Oh, a little time longer; till autumn—till the season is over—till *Gaura Dracului* is found,” he said, half laughing.

“*Gaura Dracului*?” she repeated. “I hate *Gaura Dracului*; it is my enemy. It takes you to the hills—it takes you from me—”

“Only to return to your side,” murmured István, heedlessly.

“It takes you from me, while I must sit here and wait. Wait!” she sighed wearily—“I have waited so long!”

And then István snatched recklessly at other arguments. To hear his fluent reasonings was almost to be convinced that a marriage was a thing which required several years for its completion.

He left her at last, with promises, which came so easily from his lips, echoing still in her ears.

Until the door was closed, he was the ardent lover. He had taken the red pomegranate-blossom from her hair, and with an impassioned action he pressed it to his lips at parting.

Then with his light step he ran down the staircase, and went out whistling a gay tune as he passed into the night air.

It is not of this evening, it is of the morrow that he is thinking as he walks along. He must be at the hotel to-morrow to discuss the arrangements for one of those expeditions which, apparently, he cannot help joining — no doubt on account of the invalid gentleman whose views he is so anxious to further.

What cares he for the woman from whom he has just parted? Just as much as for the pomegranate-flower which lies on the road, to be trodden into the dust by the heel of the next passer-by.

And Tryphosa sits where he has left her. There is no flower in the dead blackness of her hair. On her lips there still lingers the smile which his last kiss has left there. She is going over in thought each caress and each touch of his hand; it is almost as if only now she were tasting the full delight of his presence. Slowly the smile dies away, for her thoughts have reached another and a darker point. Her breast rises and sinks in a bitterly weary sigh.

Some people say that Princess Tryphosa is stupid; and yet István Tolnay's well-sounding protestations, his burning glances, have only half-convinced her. Not all his smiles have smoothed the line of care from her forehead; not even his kiss has lifted the weight of sadness from her heart.

CHAPTER XXVII.—THE OATH OF HERCULES.

"Hither bend you, turn you hither,
Eyes that blast and wings that wither,
Cross the wandering Christian's way,
Lead him, ere the glimpse of day,
Many a mile of maddening error
Through the maze of night and terror."

—MOORE: *Song of the Evil Spirit of the Woods.*

The spirits with whom rustic superstition peopled *Gaura Dracului* must have laughed their fiendish laugh often and often in these days, while a bootless search was leading the explorers' steps up hills and down dales, and over rocks and into gloomy forests,—sometimes miles out of the right direction, sometimes across the very track which would have led them to the spot, once even within a few hundred paces of their goal; but never up to the brink of that

bottomless chasm which split the ground in a black and terrible gulf, and yawned in its secret spot, like an open grave—waiting and always waiting. In the early morning when the ivy hung wet with dew, and at sunset when the blood-red light touched it with slanting rays, and at golden mid-day and at black midnight, that grave in the forest yawned and waited, like a monster that hungers for prey. But what prey could this monster crave?

Perhaps the fiendish spirits have laughed, as those blind people, who had eyes and who yet did not see, walked through the forest, searching for the three crosses cut in the bark. Those crosses were indeed cut in the bark—it was no sick man's fancy; and those blind people had been close to them, and had failed to recognise the marks. If fiendish spirits have got fancies to be tickled, they certainly must have laughed often and gleefully at the idea of a person taking so much trouble in order to find his own grave. Knight or lady, youth or maiden, the spirits recked not which it was, as long as they got their rightful prey.

Those few who knew the spot declared that it was haunted. When the wind blew in the beech-trees, howls, as of damned souls, mingled with the blast; the spirits danced round it at midnight, and white-robed ghosts were said to flit from the depth, and sink down again, moaning, at the first streak of dawn.

But the few who knew the spot were very few indeed; and they were no more than half-savage peasants, ignorant goat-herds, or witless stick-gatherers. Adalbert Mohr, whose interest in the search had at first been almost as keen as his daughter's, had long since given up all hope of success. Day by day, and week by week, his strength was declining, his cheek was paling; and with the ebb of vital powers came also the ebb in his feeling towards that which had once been the passion of his life. Three months ago he had thought himself as near to convalescence as to the discovery of *Gaura Dracului*; now he told himself that he was as far from the one as from the other.

It was in vain that his daughter attempted to rouse the interest slowly sinking. It might save him

yet, she told herself at times, if *Gaura Dracului* were found. Something to tear him from this ever-growing despondency might yet arrest the harm. So, at least, argued the sanguine trustfulness of youth. But even the feverish interest which bound her own thoughts to the spot could wake no response in his. When she spoke of his old manuscript, he merely sighed; and when she dwelt on her hopes of finding the brigand's treasure, and proved to him by logical deductions that these hopes were grounded, he smiled with a sort of melancholy cynicism.

"Is it not a pity to have all the ear-rings melted down?" he suggested one day. "Had you not better keep a pair for your own use, unless the shape is too far out of date? And have you quite settled on the bank where your fortune is to be lodged? You will not take less than six per cent, I suppose?" He laughed rather bitterly. "What an impostor you are, child—with your great clear eyes, your rosebud mouth, your sunbeam hair, and your logical deductions! If there could be such a thing as a strong-minded daisy, or a matter-of-fact blue-bell, I think you might be compared to that, Gretchen."

Gretchen made no answer; perhaps because she felt conscious that her interest in *Gaura Dracului* was not quite as strong-minded, nor quite as matter-of-fact, as she would fain have had her father suppose.

Be the interest what it might, it had suffered no decrease. In face of all hope, she continued perseveringly to scour the mountains, and to devise what she called "traps," in which she expected to catch the Bohemian's secret, but which as yet had proved as many signal failures. The man's inno-

once was proof against all her wiles. He would shake his head with respectful obstinacy; he regretted his inability to fulfill her wishes; he would do anything else to please the Fräulein, but the mere mention of *Gaura Dracului* was enough to throw a spell of silence over him. Even the slightest reference to his vow he shunned with nervous dread, and all Gretchen's entreaties had not yet succeeded in eliciting the history of that mysterious oath.

"I am sure it is something interesting," she said once, with a sigh of baffled curiosity.

"It is something terrible," answered the Bohemian, shuddering.

It was in the old street of the place, and beside the old stone fountain, that Gretchen had on this occasion accosted the Bohemian. She was on her way home with Kurt, and her hands were full of autumn crocuses which she had gathered in her walk. Mr Howard with his fishing-rod, and Baron Tolnay with his dog, had joined the group; for the Hercules fountain was a convenient spot of meeting: every one had to pass that way, and no one could pass unobserved.

Through the first shade of dusk the stone Hercules loomed black and gigantic above them; the waters splashed softly at his feet.

"Really," said Mr Howard, "this will never do; this fellow's superstition will be infecting us presently. We are all, as it is, mentally deranged on the subject of this preposterous place. I, for one, am anticipating my dotage. What do you think I caught myself humming this morning in my bath? Why, the air of that ridiculous song about the Roman fellow who shoved a lady down the hole in the dark—a very ungentlemanlike thing to do, by the way."

"They certainly all behaved very foolishly," said Gretchen, leaning over the edge of the fountain, and looking at her reflection in the water: "everybody was always so illogical in those times. What a comfort it is that people have become more sensible and quiet now!"

"Sensible and quiet!" said Baron Tolnay, with a peculiar laugh. "Do you think so? Why, men are just the same in this age of reason as they were in the age of romance."

"The age of folly, you should call it. I am so glad it is past; that age would never have suited me."

"And I am sorry, for it would have suited me exactly."

"What part of it?" she said, laughing; "the costumes and the feastings, perhaps,—but surely not the murder and the bloodshed?"

"Yes, even the murder and the bloodshed. I could do what they did, if I had motive enough."

"And what do you call motive enough?" she asked, absently.

Tolnay was leaning beside her now: she saw the reflection of his face alongside of her own in the water, and even in this imperfect mirror she could not fail to note the eagerness with which his eyes were seeking hers. The look on his face answered her: "Love would be my motive—love for you!"

Tolnay was not accustomed to set a guard upon his eyes, nor were his glances generally barred by timidity; but even he had never before dared to show his admiration so absolutely unveiled. Now, under cover of the presiding deity, he let fall for a moment the transparent mask of conventional restraint. Whose business, after all, was it to note the expression which he wore at the foot of the

Hercules statue? or to analyse the nature of the gaze which he sent to the depth of the Hercules fountain?

Gretchen had often before this dimly guessed that her conquest of Tolnay was complete; she had never been sure of it until now. It was the first time in all her experience of him that she had seen that earnest look on his face and that unwonted depth in his eyes. Her heart beat tumultuously; was it with triumph? or was it with fear?

"Shall I answer your question?" said István softly, beside her; but she shook her head, and all at once opening her fingers, she dropped the crocuses into the water, where they danced gaily on the surface, drawing a floating veil over the two faces below.

"Murder and bloodshed?" said Mr Howard, breaking into the conversation, which had sunk into whispers by this time. "Who is standing up for murder and bloodshed? I maintain that that Roman fellow behaved disgracefully to Mrs—whatever her name was."

"Why, Mr Howard," said Gretchen, turning her back to the statue—for the waters of Hercules had shown her more this evening than she cared to see—"it was only yesterday you told me that you did not believe a word of the legend from beginning to end!"

"Of course I don't," said Mr Howard. "If you got to the bottom of the matter, you would probably find that some tipsy woodcutter broke his neck over a pitfall in the dark; and because the branches creak round the spot, the people say that it is haunted."

"They say more than that," ventured the Bohemian, who till now had stood by in respectful silence.

"More nonsense, you mean?"

asked Mr Howard, with a sort of unwilling curiosity.

"They say that the evil spirits who live in the abyss hunger after human lives. Ever since that innocent woman found her death there, the god of the valley has granted them a victim, once in every hundred years. Some other woman or man must be sacrificed to *Gaura Dracului* in every century. There is no escape for those who are marked; Hercules has sworn it on his club!"

The Bohemian's voice had sunk to an almost inaudible whisper. He raised his blue eyes in shy terror to the stone figure above, as though diffident of speaking of the valley-god in his "sacred" presence.

It is an established fact that anything in the shape of a ghost-story sounds more real in the dusk than in the dark. There was not one of the four listeners present who could have pleaded free from a certain thrill of fluttering perturbation.

The mountain-side had grown gloomy by this time; the street was deserted; the Hercules fountain alone filled the silence with its gentle splash. Mr Howard was the first to speak.

"Come!" he cried, giving himself a shake, as though to get rid of some intangible shadow of superstition—"come, this is really irresistible! Here is a fellow who is not superstitious, but who tells us, with a face as long as a yard-measure and as white as paper, that somebody must fall down a black hole every hundred years, whether he will it or no."

"I have only repeated what is the belief among the Roumanians," said the Bohemian, somewhat loftily. "I did not say that I believed it."

"But you looked most remark-

ably as if you did a minute ago. You have not been eyewitness to one of these century-immolations, have you?"

"No," stammered the man, turning pale as ashes. "I—I—have—not—seen it."

"You have heard it then, or dreamt it," said Mr Howard, planting himself straight before the Bohemian. "Come, let us go on to the end, since we are at it."

But the Bohemian had no idea of going on to the end. For one moment he gazed at his questioner in helpless misery, then threw a wild glance around him, and, turning suddenly, fairly took to his heels up the street, leaving the party to stare at each other's faces, and invent whatever solutions they could find to the riddle of his behaviour.

These sort of scenes were not calculated to cool curiosity; and despite the failures, Gretchen's courage remained unabated. Did not the failures themselves bring pleasures in their train? And though they never came to *Gaura Dracului*, did they not come to many spots beautiful in their wild solitude, untrodden perhaps for centuries, or perchance known only to the fleet chamois or the soaring eagle?

Nor was the excitement of danger wanting to make the enjoyment complete, for there were both the bears and the robbers to be afraid of. To be sure, the bears were said to be very shy in summer, and it had not yet been proved beyond doubt that the robbers existed. But each of these causes was enough to awaken some momentary flutters, and a gentle undercurrent of trepidation, not wholly unpleasant; and both the facts together moved Herr Mohr to insist that firearms should be taken for the protection of the

party. The Bohemian, when called upon, produced a rusty gun, which had once been the property of his grandfather. He confessed to being rather surprised at the anxiety which they displayed for their lives: he did not see why people with clear consciences should require the protection of firearms; but he had no objection to humouring them by taking the gun. As to whether it would go off at the right moment, he expressed himself hopeful, though by no means sanguine. The question still remained unsolved, for neither robber nor bear had put himself within range of the Bohemian's gun. And yet there were not wanting evidences of at least the bear's existence. Passing one day through a narrow ravine, they had been startled by a shower of stones rattling down from the height. "That is a bear above us," said the Bohemian, serenely. A little later they had come upon the bleached skeleton of a horse, picked to the very bone. "It was eaten by a bear last winter," explained their guide, in the most matter-of-fact way.

No member of the party enjoyed the air, the liberty, the exhilaration of these mountain-excursions as keenly as Dr Komers. By contrast to his town-life, his murky office, and his desk-drudgery, the mountains were to him another world. He felt as though he were laying in a stock of sunshine and hill-breezes, enough to last him for a lifetime. It was delightful to feel the physical strength which had so long lain dormant—to enjoy the powers which he scarcely knew. The works of the great machinery were coming into action at last.

Ascelinde could not imagine what kept Dr Komers in the Hercules valley; and though, since the collapse of Draskócs, she never could be the same woman again,

and had not spirit enough remaining to be actively unfriendly, still she thought it unfeeling of Dr Komers to keep painful recollections alive by his presence. Since there was no more family cause, there could be no more need for a family lawyer.

Dr Komers himself did not quite know why he was staying here so long, although he gave himself a great many reasons for doing so. What good could come from following Gretchen about, since he had sworn to himself that he would woo her no more, and since he meant to hold to what he had sworn? He was strong enough to keep his oath, but not quite strong enough to put the matter aside once for all, as irrevocably fixed. In fact, during these days poor Vincenz began to suspect that he was not an iron character.

The sight of Tolnay by Gretchen's side was a continual irritant, and it did much to darken the sunshine and poison the breeze. Since Gretchen could not belong to him, of course she must belong to some other man. But, he told himself, that other man ought not to be István Tolnay. It should be an individual of peculiar excellence, and of a character more elevated than the character of any person he had ever yet met. If such a man were to be found, Vincenz felt confident that he could with calmness, almost with resignation, and perhaps a fatherly blessing on his lips, join their two hands together. He felt quite amicably disposed towards this vague man of the future; but, strangely enough, whenever the vague man threatened to become distinct, the amicable feeling turned into vehement dislike. He passed all Gretchen's acquaintances in review, and rejected them all in turn. The future man was only bearable as long as

his outline remained undefined; and perhaps it was because István Tolnay's personality was so very clearly defined, both mentally and physically, that Vincenz disliked him so much. He not only disliked, he also mistrusted him. This in itself was an excellent reason for not leaving the Hercules valley. It was his misfortune that he had so many excellent reasons, and not one that could stand on its own legs. Each leant a little against the other for support, and they ended by all knocking each other down.

It was on a clear August day that Vincenz again had taken his post of guardian and protector. The party had followed the course of the Djernis until they had come to a ruined watch-house, which marked the borders of Roumania on this side.

The season had reached its climax, and had passed it. Though the change was scarcely noticeable, yet the short-lived summer glory of the Hercules Baths was slowly declining. Autumn, with its tints, was stealing over the world, "with his gold hand gilding the falling leaf." The mornings were keen and the evenings fresh already. The green brambles in the hedges were turning black; and along the path beside the Djernis, and on the rocks by the mountain-foot, and over the ruin of the old watch-tower by the border, the wild grapes hung in bunches, slowly ripening in the sun.

Gretchen, with Tolnay by her side, had been gathering the tiny fruit, and now made a step towards a luxuriant cluster which hung from the branch of a neighbouring tree.

"Stop, Fräulein!" said the Bohemian, running to her side—"stop, for heaven's sake! You dare not go a step further than this!"

Gretchen stood still in alarm, and looked around to see what was the danger threatening; but there was nothing visible except a heap of dead branches across the path.

"And these withered leaves are to bar my passage?" she asked, touching them contemptuously with her foot.

"Though they be but leaves, they mark the frontier, Fräulein; and were we to be found only a dozen steps beyond the frontier, we should be instantly arrested and taken off to the nearest town."

"But what for, in the name of all that is illogical?"

"I cannot say that I know what for, Fräulein; perhaps they do not know it themselves. They are always suspicious, those Roumanians, and think it more natural that you should be doing harm than not."

"The Roumanian grapes look twice as good as the Hungarian ones," said Gretchen, casting a longing glance at the purple berries which hung so temptingly just out of her reach. "Forbidden fruit are always the sweetest, you know."

"I have never heard that, Fräulein; and, begging your pardon, I do not think it can be true: we can never enjoy anything if our conscience be not clear."

"Well, I could make a very comfortable meal upon forbidden fruit, I think," said Tolnay; "much more enjoyable than any legitimately obtained pine-apples or nectarines—at least to my thinking; but it is all a matter of taste."

"An acquired taste, perhaps?" put in Gretchen, looking at him over her shoulder.

"Exactly—caviare to such simple souls hampered by a tender conscience;" and the ironically compassionate glance which accom-

panied the words rested not only on the Bohemian, but on Komers as well.

"I don't like caviare," said Gretchen,—*"unwholesome, oily stuff; but I should like to take just one step into Roumania, and to gather one bunch of Roumanian grapes."*

"Come, then, let us defy the laws of the country!" said Tolnay, with his irresistible smile, and offering his arm to help her over the momentous heap of branches,—*"let us taste of the forbidden fruit together."*

And partly out of contempt for such illogical restrictions, partly out of that spirit of coquetry which in her seemed always to be called forth by István Tolnay's presence, Gretchen accepted his arm, and together they passed the line of demarcation; while, with gloomy frowning brow, Vincenz watched them disappear round a corner.

All the evil that was in her nature seemed ever ready to be roused at Tolnay's will. To watch her with that man at her side was almost to believe her the cold and heartless coquette, the mercenary fortune-hunter, which Anna declared her to be. "And that day," thought Vincenz—"that day when we spoke together in the gorge, I found it so easy to believe that she was a true woman, with a heart that could love, even if it cannot love me. Ah, what a pity is the change!"

"Ah, what a pity is the change!" Gretchen's own thoughts were saying at that very moment. "That day in the gorge he was like Hercules come down from his pedestal to save me; down here to-day he is tiresome and awkward. What a pity is the change!"

This thought was underlying all her most flippant speeches, all her most seductive smiles; and per-

haps, too, this thought made her find out that forbidden fruits are only sweet in anticipation, and that even Roumanian grapes can be sour. But nothing of this appeared on the surface, and she came back laughing and talking as lightly as before.

"Well, we have not been arrested, you see," she said addressing the others.

"And by what shadow of right should you have been arrested?" said Mr Howard. "There must be justice even in Roumania."

The Bohemian's expression seemed to say that justice was much too good a thing to be found in such a country.

"By what right, I do not know; but that they do it, I know. It is sometimes much easier to walk over the Roumanian frontier than to walk back again. Some years ago there was a gentleman here who had passed the borders without knowing it. He was seized and locked up as a political spy; and afterwards they forgot all about letting him out again, and if his relations had not found him out at the end of a month, he might be there still."

"A nice state of affairs," cried Mr Howard, with rising wrath. "I should just like to see them try to lock up a free British subject!" And at the bare idea Mr Howard grew scarlet.

"They are an ignorant people," said the Bohemian, with a sort of contemptuous apology for Roumania in general. "But they will not lock you up if you show them your papers."

"What sort of papers?" demanded the irate Englishman, who felt inclined to plunge into Roumania, all paperless as he was, merely because he was warned against so doing.

"Well, just papers," said the Bohemian, serenely. "I do not

think it matters much what they are; the more of them you have, the better. At home, in Bohemia, we need no such precautions; but in this strange land——"

"He means a passport," put in Tolnay.

"I always looked upon passports as an exploded superstition," remarked Kurt.

"So they should be," went on Mr Howard; "but people in this country cling to superstitions, it seems. If you want to travel slowly, travel with a passport by all means. It is the best recipe I know for being detained at every turn and regarded as a suspicious individual. A passport is the most suspicious-looking article possible nowadays. Last year I was travelling. I was told I must have a passport; naturally I declined. What was the result? At the French frontier I was asked for it, and distinctly informed my questioner that I had none. A terrifying Frenchman, with a black beard and rolling eyes, glared at me ferociously for a minute, then roared in a voice of thunder, '*Comment, monsieur, pas de passeport! Alors passez, monsieur!*' and I passed, very comfortably indeed."

"But it seems that our friends over there would say, '*Restez monsieur,*' laughed Kurt.

"I have got a passport," remarked Dr Komers, who till now had been following his own thoughts, but who had caught the words under discussion.

"Really!" responded Tolnay, in that tone of half mockery which he always used in addressing the lawyer. "How do you come by the obsolete article? Do you keep it as a *souvenir* of extinct customs?"

"No, it is quite new—it was drawn out a few weeks ago;" and Vincenz took out his pocket-book and began to unfold it.

"Ah, what admirable prudence! None of us have had such care of our persons."

Vincenz continued to unfold his pocket-book, perfectly unperturbed by Baron Tolnay's pin-pricks. These pin-pricks were István's greatest pleasure. He delighted in displaying his youthfulness under the eyes of the elder man, who would fain be his rival. That the lawyer could ever succeed in being his rival, was an idea far too preposterous to have occurred to István's mind.

"I got the passport to satisfy my sister," said Vincenz calmly, while he smoothed out the rustling document. "She believed that without it I was exposing myself to innumerable dangers."

Tolnay threw a glance of disparagement at the battered leather pocket-book from which the passport had issued.

"Does not such a magnificent document deserve a more worthy resting-place?"

"I prize this pocket-book above everything else in the world," said Vincenz, with sudden fire. "It is dearer to me than the most sacred relic." He spoke only on a thoughtless impulse, but Tolnay had caught the tone.

Quick as lightning his glance shot towards Gretchen. A faint flush was on her cheek: she knew well enough that this old pocket-book was the same that she had once stitched together for Dr. Komers.

Of this István Tolnay knew nothing. And yet it was at this moment, while he stood beside the ruined watch-tower, and looked from one face to the other, that there was sown in István's soul the first frail seed of a plant which was to bear bitter fruit.

THE HERO OF LEPANTO AND HIS TIMES.

NOTWITHSTANDING the marked leaning of the literary world towards biographies during the present century, our English writers had let 1900 come wellnigh upon them without their presenting us with a life of the hero of Lepanto. Now that the void has been ably filled, it is easy to perceive after the event what a fruitful field it was which was left for so long unworked. For it is not only as a conqueror and a prominent historical figure that Don John of Austria interests us. His career was run when the ten centuries of darkness had just closed ; and the actions and circumstances of it—apart from wars, politics, and religions—are admirably illustrative of the moral and social condition of that attractive period. The curtain was already falling on the eld of fable, tradition, and twilight chronicle when he came upon the scene ; and attending his few but eventful days appeared the day-spring of history, the dawn of the arts, the renaissance of poetry with its civilising influence. At the same time there lay upon Europe enough of middle-age shadow to prolong the waning empires of those cherished unrealities which are the province of romance, and which lend such delicious enchantment to days of old. A figure better worth exhibiting faithfully and particularly is not to be lighted on at every epoch.

There were, no doubt, sufficient reasons why the writing of the life of this illustrious personage by a British author was postponed ; and one of these probably was, that the great historical events of which he was a great part have been amply recounted to us. But who, after

feeding full of the stories of heroic achievements and of events big with the future of nations and races, can rise from his study without a yearning to know the personal story of one whose appearances in the great tableaux of the past have created such thrilling emotion ? One of our foremost poets names in the same line.

“Actium, Lepanto, fatal Trafalgar !”

If these seafights deserve to be ranked together, one of them certainly may complain of some discourtesy on the part of posterity. We have abundant knowledge of them who led at Actium. Of the hero of Trafalgar English pens have not failed to register the minutest particulars, which English minds still receive with almost the devotion due to sacred writings ; but somehow English curiosity concerning the life of him who led the Christian fleets at Lepanto, and broke the power of the dreaded Turk has, until lately, been patient. Looking into Maunder's ‘Universal Biography,’ we find under the word *Austrea* the following notice : “D. Juan, a Spanish admiral, born in 1545 ; remembered as the conqueror of the Turks at Lepanto.” A scant account this of a man who took a prominent part in the most important European affairs of his generation ; whose praise was hymned by poets and told out by orators and authors far and near ; who was without co-rival

“The glass of fashion, and the mould of form.

The observed of all observers ;”

to whom the Vicar of Christ thought it proper to apply the

words, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John."

We may say then, without fear of contradiction, that Sir William Stirling-Maxwell designed a good work when he set himself "to write unto us in order" the chief events of the life of the distinguished commander, Don John of Austria.¹ With what degree of success he achieved his purpose these pages are intended to discover in some sort. Our readers will find, as we think, that the author defined correctly the scope of his task, that he has made the career of his subject the trunk line of his story; but that he has not hesitated to diverge from it judiciously at intervals, that he may place beside us, as we go along, pictures illustrative of the manners and customs of the time, and lucid descriptions of means and appliances which have long been obsolete.

The work before us is the product of much learning and research, of which we are little able and little disposed to constitute ourselves the judges. We choose rather to sit at Sir William Stirling-Maxwell's feet, to take what account we can of his labours, and to indicate the instructive and entertaining character of his scholarly narration. Our intention is to point where we can to matter which has hitherto been untold, or very sparingly told, in our tongue. Of course, such great themes as the Morisco rebellion, the Holy League against the Turks, and the struggles of the Netherlands with Spain, which are fully and graphically related here, cannot but claim attention in their places. Nevertheless, in following

the account of these we shall by no means shut from view the "passages," as our author calls them, which take us back to the life of the sixteenth century.

The life of Don John was a romance from beginning to end. Many a hero of fiction has been wrought out of far less romantic material than that which made up his very impressive true biography. Our readers will probably think with us that there could not be a Don John in these matter-of-fact days, in which *we* live. In his birth and his death, in his deeds, his adventures, and his aspirations, we are reminded of ballads and traditions rather than of the workaday world; and yet he was a real living man, a mainspring of his generation, as our accomplished author has cunningly taught us.

About his birth and his early youth a rigid mystery was cast and maintained. He was nourished, habited, taught and shown to the rural folk among whom he lived, as the son of a musician who had retired from Court to pass his days in a village a little to the south of Madrid. His Christian name was then said to be Jerome. His condition at this period was that of a disguised prince of fairy lore. He knew not, his foster-parents knew not, there was not half-a-dozen persons in Europe who knew that he might claim the Emperor Charles the Fifth for his sire. Barbara Blomberg, a woman of a noble house at Ratisbon, has been generally believed to have been his mother, though there were rumours that he had been born of a princess whose name has not been given. The mother, whoever she may

¹ Don John of Austria; or, *Passages from the History of the Sixteenth Century, 1547-1578.* By the late Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, Bart. London: Longmans, Green, & Co.

have been, was but little connected with his career. At seven years old, that is to say in the year 1554 (he having been born in 1547), the little Jerome was removed from the care of his foster-mother, the musician's widow, and placed in charge of an illustrious and gentle lady, Doña Magdalena de Ulloa, whom he called his aunt, and who was in after years regarded by him with the respect and affection due to a parent. Doña Magdalena was the wife of the Emperor's vice-chamberlain, Colonel Luis Quixada, who was one of the very few persons intrusted with the secret of Don John's parentage. This gracious lady resided chiefly at Villagarcia, not far from Valladolid, where she was frequently left alone with her young charge, Quixada's duties requiring his presence in the Netherlands with his sovereign. She knew that the boy was the son of a person of distinction; and she had reason to suspect that his father was of very high rank indeed. For, a fire having occurred in the house at Villagarcia at a time when the vice-chamberlain was with his household, the gallant colonel rushed to save his young charge, whom he saw in safety before he rescued his wife. Doña Magdalena knew well that only a sense of duty would have induced her husband to attend to any one before her at a time of danger: duty could be owing by Quixada only to an exalted personage; Jerome, therefore, or John, as he was afterwards to be called, must be of illustrious birth.

Not only was the boy placed in new hands, but from the time when he was transferred to Villagarcia he was clothed like a youth of rank, and treated with much more respect than when he roamed the fields and attended a village school

with peasant lads as the musician's son. Doña Magdalena, childless herself, found a solace and an occupation in rearing and educating her foster-son, whom she herself instructed in his religious duties, making him the channel of her large charitable bounties. She took care, also, that he should be taught by competent persons such branches of knowledge and such accomplishments as were thought necessary for his condition.

In 1558 Doña Magdalena and Don John accompanied Quixada to Yuste, where the worn-out Emperor had settled himself in retirement, and where he still required the services of his faithful vice-chamberlain. Here Charles saw, and expressed himself as much pleased with, his as yet unacknowledged son, and especially praised the pains which had been taken to make him religious. The family of Quixada had been but a short time settled in the neighbourhood of the convent when the duties which had brought them there were terminated by the Emperor's somewhat sudden death. Don John is supposed to have been one of the group of attendants, nobles, and ecclesiastics who stood round the bed of the dying Emperor; and he attended the monarch's real funeral, but not the rehearsal of it of which the living Charles was a spectator.

The Emperor left behind him a paper in which he distinctly acknowledges Don John (there called Jerome) as his son. In it he further states his wish that the lad should become a friar. But he does not desire that there should be any forcing of inclination; and, in case of Don John declining the cowl, he provides for him "each year, from twenty to thirty thousand ducats from the revenues of the kingdom of Naples; lands and

vassals, with that rent attached, being assigned to him."

After the Emperor's death Don John returned with Quixada and his wife to Villagarcia. Much has not been said of this short residence near Yuste. There is, however, mention made of a failing which adds another proof to the many otherwise forthcoming, that royal blood by no means exempts its possessor from very vulgar propensities. He stole apples while there, and was often pelted by the peasants when seen in the trees.

It seems that rumours, more or less correct, of the Emperor having left and acknowledged a natural son, began now to circulate: and Quixada with difficulty parried inquiries made to him by persons of note. The Princess Regent of Spain, the Infanta Doña Juana, having heard and believed those rumours, used the occasion of a great public spectacle at Valladolid in 1559 to observe the boy, to caress him and to offer him a place in the royal tribune, which, however, he declined, preferring to remain at the side of his good aunt. This spectacle was no other than an *auto-da-fé*, which Doña Magdalena, full of zeal for Holy Church, had taken her young charge to witness. They who would see a graphic account of this dreadful ceremony must refer to Sir W. Stirling-Maxwell's pages. We will, however, try to abridge his narrative of it for the benefit of readers not blessed with leisure.

The sufferers at the hands of the Inquisition had been generally peasants accused of witchcraft, Moors or Jews; but on this occasion there was a more remarkable train of prisoners. Nobles and gentlemen, ladies of the highest rank, eloquent divines, were among the convicted. The Regent took her place under a canopy of state:

the multitude gathered round a platform in the middle of the area, on which the Inquisitor-General and his train were stationed. The long line of prisoners consisted of "the black-gowned penitents who were to be reprimanded and set free; those in robes painted with downward-pointing flames, who were to suffer fine and imprisonment; and those whose garbs, hideous with fire and fiends, denoted that their bodies were to be burned for the salvation of their souls." A sermon was preached, then an oath of faith was administered by an archbishop to the Regent and to her nephew, the heir to the throne. A secretary made known to the multitude the terms of this oath: the archbishop blessed their highnesses: and then a crier shouted forth the names, crimes, and sentences of the accused, fifteen of whom were to die. They were executed at once. "The Princess Regent of Spain, and the noble knights and dames of Castille, looked on as the flames crept and leaped round the tortured limbs of men who had been their familiar friends and spiritual advisers, of fair and delicate women dragged from splendid homes or from the solitude of the cloister."

Soon after this, Philip the Second, who had been absent in the Netherlands, returned to Spain, and relieved the Infanta of the Regency. This done, he did not wait long before he, to whom the Emperor's instructions had been addressed, openly proclaimed his relationship to Don John, who, at this time, dropped altogether the name of Jerome. The recognition was a somewhat theatrical affair, and the romantic air gathers thick about it. The King, who was really no sportsman, ordered a hunt on a hill not far from Villagarcia, and summoned Quixada to meet him

in the field, of course instructing him as to the part which he was to play. Quixada, before setting off, unbosomed himself to his wife, and made her a sharer of the great secret which he had carried for so many years. Then he and Don John, followed by vassals and servants, rode off. Presently they were aware of the royal approach. A groom met them leading a very handsome horse, which, at Quixada's desire, Don John mounted, after having with some reluctance, suffered his guardian to kiss his hand.

Then came the important meeting. Philip rode up. Don John and his tutor dismounted and knelt. As the lad bent over the King's hand, the latter asked if the youngster knew who he was, and then said, "Charles the Fifth, my lord and father, was also your father." Don John was then formally acknowledged as his Majesty's half-brother. The hunters and peasants shouted; the nobles and gentlemen of the train saluted and congratulated the newly found scion of royalty. The *cortège*, without pursuing the sport, turned and rode back to the city, Don John by the side of the King, and the multitude rending the air with acclamations. Thus ended the chrysalis stage. Don John himself, and all the world, knew who he was when he was twelve years old or thereabouts. But it was only the first fytte of his romance that was over.

A splendid establishment was now assigned to "the most illustrious Don John of Austria," who, except in some few points of title and of precedence, received the honours of an Infant of Spain. His friend Quixada was at the head of his household. His education was conducted with that of Don Carlos, the heir to the throne, and of Prince Alexander of Parma,

grandson of the Emperor. In due time the three youths went together to the university of Alcalá, where the unhappy Don Carlos met with a serious accident, after which he showed himself to be the *mauvais sujet* which he continued to be to the end of his brief career. We cannot here, however, turn aside to glance at his oft-repeated story.

Don John betook himself very kindly to martial exercises and manly sports, while his royal brother, mindful of the Emperor's directions, was taking order for securing him a good position in the hierarchy. So much in earnest was Philip on this matter, that, but for a disagreement between him and the Pope relative to the precedence of the cardinal-elect, it had been all over with *arma virumque*. The dispute, however, protracted matters, and gave time to the young hero to find out the bent of his inclinations, and the resolve that the active world, and not the cloister, should be the theatre of his exploits. While his career was still undecided on at Court, the Turks attacked Malta, and a fleet of Spain was ordered to sail to the assistance of the island. Don John thought he would settle the question of his profession; he accordingly ran away from Court and made for the coast. But he was taken ill on the road, the fleet sailed without him, and emissaries from the Court overtook him. He was obliged to return and beg pardon. Philip forgave him graciously, and the beautiful queen, Isabella of Valois, "chaffed" him and made him look silly. It was, however, seen that the project of making him an ecclesiastic must be given up. His tutelary fairy knew what was in store for him, and inclined the King's heart to waive graciously the idea of the tonsure.

We extract now a curious occurrence of this period of his life :—

“On the 15th November he revisited, as a prince, the village of Getafe, where he had formerly been at school as a nameless peasant boy. It was on occasion of the arrival there of the holy corpse of St Eugenius, which was being transported from its long repose at St Denis, to the cathedral where the saint had once reigned as primate, at Toledo. Philip II. had purchased the precious bones from Charles IX. at the moderate price of the skull of St. Quintin, of which he had despoiled the town so called, after his victory in 1557. An infinity of documents and seals recorded and ratified the bargain; and a deputation of French nobles and prelates placed the remains of the Toledan saint in the hands of a similar embassy from Spain at Bordeaux. They were thence conveyed with almost royal pomp to Toledo, receiving at each halting-place the adoration of the faithful. Getafe being only two leagues from Madrid; it was there that Queen Isabella and the devout Infanta Juana, attended by Don John, went to pay their homage. Three days afterwards the venerable skeleton made its entry into the old archiepiscopal city, the King and Don Carlos kneeling in the wayside dust to do it honour.”

At the age of twenty-one, Don John, erewhile the nameless peasant boy Jerome, was appointed *General of the Sea*, an appointment equivalent to that of Lord High Admiral. He embarked and hoisted his flag with due ceremony, and made several small voyages, in the course of which some minor operations of war were undertaken. His expeditions were not historically important, neither did they bring much glory to himself. It was, however, remarked that he got through this his novitiate in command with a degree of credit which could hardly have been predicted for one so young. His temper and bearing were most favourably re-

marked upon; and he, no doubt, used this opportunity for acquiring a knowledge of the duties of command on that element whereon he was destined to win an imperishable fame. While he was in active command, his nephew and old associate Don Carlos came to his sad and somewhat mysterious end.

Having brought his cruise to a close, the Lord Admiral repaired to Court, and was well received. Only a short time after his arrival there, all were plunged into grief by the death of the beautiful young Queen. The King, in his bereavement, treated his half-brother with the utmost affection and confidence. But, at the funeral ceremonies, Don John was offended at some slight which he imagined to be put upon him with regard to precedence—a most weighty matter at that Court in those days; and he withdrew in dudgeon to the country, passing his time at religious houses or with his “aunt” Doña Magdalena. It was not likely that one of so ardent a nature as his would bear to be long in shadow, and accordingly we find him, after two months or so of retirement, availing himself of the Morisco rebellion, which had now broken out, to solicit employment. It appears that there was then no inconsistency in employing the General of the Sea in command of land forces.

After the rule of the Moors had been utterly suppressed in the Peninsula, this people, remaining in the southern province under Spanish government, were known as Moriscoes. They had treaty rights, of which the dearest to them was the right of remaining Mohammedans, and of practising the rites of their religion. It was hoped, perhaps, by the Spanish priesthood and people, that infidels who had consented to live under

the same laws as the Christian population would, little by little, lose their distinctive character, and conform to the habits, and be won over to the religion, of their conquerors. This hope, which in so many similar instances has been disappointed, was not destined to fruition in Spain. The Arabs, though peaceable and loyal subjects, in their dress, language, manners, and religion, remained Arabs still.

The Inquisition was established about the time of the conquest of Granada; and its eyes, as one can well understand, were turned with extreme jealousy on a race who, privileged to live under Christian ascendancy, were insensible to the truths and beauties of the Christian religion. This jealousy was the cause of the Morisco rebellion, and finally of the expulsion of the great body of the Moors from Spain. Churchmen, finding that Arab converts were excessively tardy in coming in, were urgent that pressure should be used to bring these heathens into the Christian fold. Such pressure was a gross and cruel violation of a solemn treaty; nevertheless, the importunity of the clergy succeeded in inducing the Government to exert it, gently at first, but more and more insolently as the Moriscoes continued firm in their faith, until the oppression was more than the goaded people could bear, and they broke into revolts of which racial and religious hatreds were the causes and the fuel.

At first the Government found itself able to cope with the complaints and the resistance of the Moors. From the days of Ferdinand and Isabella to the last days of the Emperor Charles V., there had been in the dealings with the Moriscoes some regard for safe policy, notwithstanding the conces-

sions that were made to intolerance and the injustice with which treaties were overridden. But under Philip II. bigotry was allowed to take its unbridled will, prudential considerations were cast to the winds, and the Arabs were exasperated into a rebellion which it taxed the power of Spain to overcome, which desolated some of her fairest provinces, and which deprived her of an ingenious and industrious body of subjects, who in every art except that of war, far excelled her Christian population. The treacheries and intrigues of this war, in which either side was impelled by the fiercest passions, almost exceed belief; and the cruelties of which both Christians and infidels were guilty, raise the greatest horror and loathing in the reader's mind. Burnings, massacres, torturings, were of constant occurrence; capitulations were violated and prisoners destroyed by wholesale butchery; women and children were sold into slavery; and pillage was every where permitted. It is true that deeds of great valour were frequently performed; but as for generosity, pity, or common humanity, these sentiments seem to have been altogether banished from the region in which the Morisco revolt was acted.

The King's Government was slow to recognise the magnitude of the insurrection which it had provoked; consequently, its attempts at suppression, though successful in places, proved often abortive. The rebels, though they suffered severely in many encounters, had enough of good fortune not only to keep their resistance alive, but to make it spread. When it had been maintained with vigour for three months—that is to say, from the commencement of the year 1569 till April of that year—Don

John of Austria arrived at Granada to take command of the royal troops and the disturbed districts, it having been perceived at last that the King had a formidable undertaking on his hands. Procrastination was one of the defects of Philip's character, and he had procrastinated here to his own serious detriment. Unnecessary caution, and the fettering of enterprise by dividing responsibility, and by requiring a reference to himself on every important occasion before action could be taken, were other of his methods which did not assist despatch or make for success.

Don John was to be assisted by a council, who were to discuss and to decide on all measures of importance; but even the decision of the council was not to be acted upon until it should have been approved by the Supreme Council at Madrid. When it is considered how effective sudden resolutions and movements may be in putting down an outbreak, one perceives that Don John's task was set for him in no encouraging way. The King, however, was kind and helpful according to his lights. He sent Don John with all honour to his command, he gave him his instructions in affectionate terms, and he appointed to a seat at the local council Luis Quixada, the general's erewhile guardian and constant friend. It was ordered that Don John should be treated with all the honour ever accorded to a person not royal. His fairy was thrusting greatness upon him without let or hindrance, that he might shortly achieve more glorious greatness for himself.

So cumbrous a system of command was not likely to result in brisk achievements. Don John was, during the first three months of his residence at Granada, able to do

but little in the field. He, however, held receptions and reviews, and received deputations, winning everywhere golden opinions by the dignity and suavity of his manners and by his noble appearance. The first important act of his command appears to have been the expulsion of the Moorish inhabitants from the Albaycin quarter of Granada. These wretched people were got rid of because they were thought to be the centre from which, secretly, all the expeditions which took place in the theatre of war were plotted. They were assembled in the churches, and from thence marched, under military escort, into other parts of Spain. In a tumult which occurred at the time of their exodus, Don John showed great presence of mind.

Nine months passed away, not in inaction, but in warfare which was marked by no decisive result, though it was marked by enough of ferocity. The royal armies were at length largely reinforced, and Don John, who had hitherto directed operations from Granada, now took the field in person. In his first expedition he was accidentally baffled, not by the enemy, but by a force led by another general, which obtained possession of the fortress of Guejar before he came up. He bore his mortification well, and behaved with much discretion on the occasion. His next attempt was attended with a success which was all his own, and to which his personal gallantry and his skill as a leader contributed in no small degree. He attacked and took the town of Galera, which was fortified more by nature than by art, it being perched upon an eminence, the sides of which were everywhere precipitous. We find the assailants using artillery in the attack, exploding mines with great

effect, and making military bridges. It is recorded of the leader that, seeing his men to be a good deal harassed by the fatigue of cutting and bringing up the brushwood which was required for the approaches, he set to work himself, and brought up his burdens like a common soldier.

With all his care he did not take Galera at the first assault; and one reads with regret how, after failure, he announced that he would raze the place to the ground, sow the site with salt, and put every inhabitant to the sword. A ferocious announcement of this kind seems to have had the effect of stirring up the resolution of soldiers of those days. After much laborious engineering and severe fighting, the King's troops at last got the place. It is asserted by one historian that Don John kept his word to the letter, and commanded and superintended a most inhuman butchery. But there are other accounts which represent him as doing all he could to mitigate the fury of his soldiers, and these last testimonies are far more in consonance with his general sentiments and conduct.

He now attacked the fortress of Seron. The troops behaved badly, and the attack, for this time, failed. But Don John sustained a misfortune here greater than that of being foiled by infidel hands before a battered wall. A bullet, and an unskilful surgeon, deprived him of the stout soldier and courtier who had shown to him all that he ever knew of a father's care. Brave, faithful, sagacious Luis Quixada received his death-wound in front of Seron. The veteran was carried to Caniles, where he lingered under the torture of clumsy surgery for many days, during which

Doña Magdalena was summoned to, and arrived at, his bedside, where she marked his last sigh and closed his eyes. The funeral was attended with great military pomp, and the Commander-in-Chief followed the body as chief mourner. Doña Magdalena left the camp afterwards, escorted by a squadron of cavalry, and attended for a long way by Don John, who rode beside her litter. It is most refreshing, among the instances of savagery and hardness of heart with which those days abounded, to read of the lamentation expressed by every one, from the King downwards, at the loss of Quixada, and of the tributes which were paid to his fidelity and other good qualities.

At this time King Philip thought it right to take his brother, Don John, to task for so freely confronting danger in his own person. The answer to this reproach was quite worthy of a good commander and soldier, and showed that the general, young as he was, had a sound knowledge of his duties and responsibilities; that he did not enter upon rash exploits to display his valour, but that where, for example or for guidance, the presence of the general was required, he could not for any consideration remain in the background.

The army was reinforced, and took Seron, Don John ordering the attack with much judgment. After that he took Tijola and then Purchena. His lieutenants were at work as well as himself: there were very many affairs besides those which have been mentioned here; and the royal armies, at length raised to becoming strength, acquired an ascendancy which was most discouraging to the rebel cause. The King's officers perceived this, and they issued proclamations

setting forth the terms on which traitors might yet escape the extreme penalties, but denouncing, without hope of mercy, the severest chastisements known to war against such as should continue disobedient after knowledge of this offer of remission. The issuing of these proclamations may be looked upon as the beginning of the end of the Morisco war. It was not concluded at once, nor without some farther contention; for the Morisco chief, or king as he claimed to be, after making considerable advances towards accommodation, thought he saw another chance of winning, and once more drew the remnant of his unhappy nation into open hostilities. Thus they rendered themselves liable to the most dreadful penalties with which the King had threatened them, and only too many of them drank to the dregs the cup of his indignation. The royal troops had now mustered in such strength that it was useless for the reduced Morisco bands to contend with them longer. A little farther struggle, and the rebellion collapsed. The rebel king was slain by treachery in the mountains; but his corpse was brought down to Granada,—and it was thought rather a fine pageant of triumph to wedge the dead body in a frame, set it upright upon a mule, and to parade it with much show and shouting through the streets. After this miserable exhibition, the head was severed from the trunk, and fixed on a spike over one of the gates of Granada.

The rebel Moriscos who had been taken in arms were sold for slaves into all cities and districts of Spain. Those who had not rebelled were forcibly removed from the theatre of rebellion, and dispersed through the other provinces. The tale of expatriation is most heartrending, even among stories

of cruel and bloody deeds. It was a "bag and baggage" removal. He who studies the account of it will appreciate the truculency of the proposal made regarding the Turks by an English orator towards the end of the nineteenth century—the most inhuman utterance which any man, claiming to be a statesman, has allowed himself to make in modern days!

Don John "wound up" the affairs of the war. He had been about eighteen months in command. He had been ultimately successful: he had made no great mistake: his conduct and his personal valour were greatly praised: and he was said to have acquired considerable renown. Probably, however, if his renown had never rested on anything more solid than this Morisco war, it would have been at the best local and partial. His chief glory from that miserable war is that he made use of it for perfecting himself in the arts of command, that he gained store of experience, and that he educated himself for the acquisition of a fame which was undoubtedly European, and which made him for a span "the foremost man of all this world." The wave of the wand which was to show the fairy favours at their meridian was now to be given.

It was the fortune of Don John to have always work awaiting him at times when his hands became free. Before things had been re-established on a peace footing in the south of Spain after the Morisco war, he had been already nominated to the splendid command in which he did the great exploit of his life. Pope Pius V. had, after much anxiety and labour, succeeded in constructing the Holy League of the Christian Powers against the Turk; and it had been decided (though not until after

long and animated discussion) that the half-brother of the King of Spain should be appointed to the chief command of the fleets and forces of the League—that is to say, that he was to be supreme both afloat and on shore.

The account given by Sir W. Stirling-Maxwell of the antecedent events which led to the formation of this memorable confederacy is full of interest, and will repay careful study. Our space does not admit of any but the briefest mention of them here.

The Turks of those days were the terror of all Europe. Their fleets and armies were more numerous than those of any other power, though their navy was inferior in quality to that of Spain. They were rapidly encroaching upon the territories of the Mediterranean Powers, causing some of them to tremble for their very existence, and giving ground for serious anxiety to all. Malta, defended by her valiant knights, had resisted and beaten off the Infidel attack; but this success of the Christians, glorious as it was to those who won it, had not materially checked the tide of Turkish advance. Venice, as a great commercial power, was in continual danger from the Turkish arms, and, even now, her possession, the isle of Cyprus, had partly succumbed to them. Philip II., as ruler of a large Italian territory, and as the most potent prince of Christendom, was in the first degree interested in keeping down the pretensions of the Turk. Pope Pius V. made war on the Infidel in the spirit of a crusader. Though an old man, he was chivalrous, firm of purpose, eloquent, and indefatigable. The suppression of the heathen was the great desire of his heart, to the attainment of which he devoted all his energies.

The Pope was the soul of the League. Philip listened not only to the call of his temporal interests in taking the foremost place in the holy alliance, but also to the call of the Pontiff, who exhorted him to draw his sword as the champion of the Church. Venice was already at war with the Sultan. These three were the chief Powers of the League. They were all sincere enough in desiring to repress the Turk; but Spain would have liked to do this whilst giving the least possible advantage to Venice, and Venice would have liked to do it without aggrandising Spain.

The zeal of the old Pontiff, after being many times baffled, and after toiling through months of negotiations, triumphed at last. He saw the day when the Holy League solemnly swore to make war on the Turk, and was glad. His services to the cause were, however, by no means ended when the League was proclaimed as a reality to all Christendom. The members of the confederacy required to be quickened into united action as well as formally joined together; and, though their bond was blessed, they would probably have never struck a blow in unison but for the sustaining incitement which the Pope continued to address to them.

Venice, as has been said, was already at war with the Turk. The Papal States and the Italian dominions of the Spanish King were rendering some assistance to the Republic before the great League was an accomplished fact. But the operations of the allies were insignificant, as is not unfrequently the case with coalitions. The united fleet might have done much to save Cyprus for the Venetians, but it did nothing in that direction—nothing, indeed, worth mentioning in any direction. The

Pope was probably right in his opinion that vigorous action was more likely to proceed from a solemn League, cemented by the oaths of illustrious ambassadors—blessed by himself with all the pomp and splendour which the Church knew so well how to exhibit—proclaimed to the civilised world by the forms with which priestcraft and statecraft are wont to impress the devout and the patriotic, and so subjected to the observation of all Europe,—than from any other method. When his Holiness had done all that his courage, skill, and patience could effect—and he did wonders—all would have been useless had it not been for the chief corner-stone which, by consummate judgment or by most felicitous accident, was made to surmount the edifice of the Holy League. It is abundantly clear that but for the temper, the judgment, and the quick decision of Don John of Austria, the vast armament of the League would have done nothing more worthy of note than was done in the previous year; that state jealousies and divided councils of commanders would have brought to nought all that the wisdom of conclaves and senators had matured, and which the wealth of the Church and of many kingdoms had provided; and that one of the great battles of the world would not have been fought.

This is a convenient place to pause in the outline which we are tracing of Don John's career, that we may say a word of the very interesting information regarding the war navies of his time which is to be found in the pages under review. Ships, armaments, officers, crews, and propelling powers are clearly set before us, giving a veritable advantage to that reader who would realise the naval scenes so cleverly depicted farther on. Ac-

counts of voyaging and fighting would be scarcely intelligible to an understanding not having a true idea of the navies which achieved them; and the descriptions which we find in the first volume are so clear and so full as to prepare effectually for a complete comprehension of the sea-stories. We must refer the curious to the chapter on navies; but there are one or two matters of much importance to the general reader, on which we may say a few words.

The *propelling power* which we mentioned above was, in all but a very few cases, the *thews and sinews of galley-slaves*, who, chained to their seats on the benches, and incited to exertion by the most savage discipline, plied the oars. How a miserable man might find himself in the condition of one of these propellers, the following extract may explain:—

“The benches of the unhappy slaves of the oar brought into close contact men of all countries and conditions, and all varieties of moral character. The Moslem from the Bosphorus, from Tunis, or the slopes of Atlas, here mingled with Greek and Latin Christians of all races and languages. Here, side by side in common misery, sat the brave soldier whom the fate of war had made a captive, and the wretch who was paying the penalty of the most odious crimes; the gallant gentleman who had shone in the princely tilt-yard or at royal banquets, and the outcast whose home was the street or the pier; the man of thought and feeling, whose conscience refused to receive unquestioned the faith as it was in the Inquisition at Valladolid or Rome, and the ruffian who stabbed for hire in the tortuous lanes of Valencia, or beneath the deep-browed palaces of Naples. Turkish officers, wont to ride in the gorgeous train which attended the Sultan to the mosques of Constantinople, were at this moment chained to the oars of Don John of Austria; and Knights

of Malta were lending an unwilling impulse to the vessels which Ali Pasha was leading through the channels of the Archipelago to do battle with the fleet of the Holy League. The Turkish galleys being more exclusively rowed by foreign captives, advantage in a naval action was embittered to the Christian combatants by the knowledge that their artillery, which mowed down their turbaned foes, was also dealing agony and death amongst fettered friends and brethren, who an hour before had hailed with hope and exultation the approach of the flag of their country and their creed."

A second extract will afford some idea of what life at the oar was like :—

"The gang of galley-slaves was seated in close order on benches covered with coarse sacking rudely stuffed, over which were thrown bullocks' hides. Five or six of them occupied a bench 10 or 11 feet long. To a footboard beneath, each man was attached by a chain ending in an iron band riveted round one of his ankles. The benches were so close together that as one row of men pushed forward their oar, the arms and oar of the row behind were projected over their bended backs. The size and weight of the oar were so great that, except at the end where it was tapered to a manageable size, it was necessary to work it by handles fixed to the side.

"The slaves were overlooked by the boatswain. His place was on the gangway, close to the sternmost oars, where he was at all times within hearing of the orders of the captain. Along the gangway, at regular intervals, his mate and the driver were posted, so that the conduct of each slave was under inspection. The oars were put in motion or stopped by the sound of a silver whistle, worn by the boatswain, who, with his mates, was armed with a heavy whip of bull's sinew to stimulate the exertions of the slaves. When it was necessary to continue the labour for many hours without respite, they would administer, in addition to the lash, morsels

of bread steeped in wine, which they put in the mouths of the men as they rowed. If, in spite of these precautions, a slave sank from fatigue, he was whipped until it was evident that no further work was to be obtained from him, and then thrown either into the hold, where, amongst bilgewater and filth, he had a chance of recovering his consciousness, or, if his case appeared desperate, into the sea."

From twenty to twenty-six pairs of oars impelled the ordinary war-galley, which was a vessel of two or three masts, and of 120 to 150 tons burden. Its artillery was mounted on the forecastle and poop, and along its centre ran the gangway above-mentioned. A sharp peak was fitted to the prow for ramming the enemy; but, as we shall see further on, it interfered in some instances with the effects of the guns of the forecastle, and might be dispensed with. The galley could hoist sails when convenient, and so was not wholly dependent on her oars.

The *galeasse* was a larger and heavier vessel than the galley, not so easily handled, and therefore of more doubtful utility in fleet actions. Larger still than the *galeasse* was the *ship*, which was moved by sails alone, and which, therefore, was a somewhat cumbersome craft to the navigators of the sixteenth century.

There were also light vessels smaller than the galley, called *frigates* and *brigantines*. We return now to the deeds of Don John and his fleet.

Messina was chosen as the rendezvous of the League's great fleet. We have not room for a catalogue of the ships, although most interesting particulars thereof are to be found in the pages from which we are gleaning. We content ourselves with saying that the fleet when assembled was the greatest

Christian armament that had ever floated in the Mediterranean. Old Sebastian Veniero was Captain-General for Venice, with Quirini and Barbarigo as Commissaries.¹ Marc Antonio Colonna sailed as the Papal Admiral; Luis de Requesens, Grand Commander of Castile, had flying the flag of the highest Spanish leader; Giovanni Andrea Doria was over Philip's Sicilian contingent, and the Marquis of Santa Cruz brought a squadron from Naples. Upwards of three hundred ships and eighty thousand men were under the orders of Don John.

The Captain-General of the League was one of the last commanders to arrive at Messina. His progress thither was a series of magnificent receptions and spectacles, which seemed by anticipation to celebrate the great victory towards which he was bound. He travelled on horseback from Madrid to Barcelona with a great retinue, being received at every halting-place with distinguished honours; the cities illuminating, presenting addresses, displaying banners and all their bravery, and firing deafening peals of artillery. On the way he was met by a courier bearing an autograph letter from the Pope and despatches from many of his generals—the first signs of the new and important duties upon which he was entering. At Barcelona he began to hold conferences and to issue orders. He embarked in his flag-ship under great salutes, remained a day or two in harbour, and then sailed for Genoa, where he was received on the quay by the Doge and signiory. At a splendid entertainment here given to him by Doria were fifty-two ladies, all dressed in crimson and

white satin and sparkling with jewels; and at the ball with which it concluded, the dancing of Don John surprised and delighted everybody by its spirit and grace. From Genoa and Spezia he despatched gentlemen to pay his respects to the different Italian princes; then he proceeded to Naples, which, as one may be sure, outdid even the gorgeous pageantry which he had witnessed in other cities. Here he, dressed with great magnificence, received on his knees, in the church of Santa Chiara, from the hands of Cardinal Granvelle, his baton of command, and the banner of the Holy League, the gift of the Pope. The choir and the multitude echoed the "Amen" with which the young commander responded to the Cardinal's impressive blessing. A week after this he was at Messina. "The combined artillery of Messina and of Venice and the Holy See awoke the echoes of Scylla and Charybdis in honour of the long-looked-for flag of the commander-in-chief of the Holy League," and the fleets put to sea.

It is worth mentioning here that Don John, while he tarried at Genoa, seems to have been first impressed with an idea which was destined to be hereafter the great desire of his mind. The Pope, writing to exhort him to undying effort in his great undertaking, promised him the sovereignty of the first territory that he should wrest from the Turks. After that, the young hero never let go the belief that he was to win a kingdom—somewhere; which was quite in accordance with the suggestions of old romance.

Particulars, we suspect, are not forthcoming of the composition and

¹ The Commissary was a high officer, ranking immediately after the Commander. Barbarigo commanded Don John's left wing at Lepanto.

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numbers of the Turkish fleet which fought at Lepanto. There were galleys to the number of two hundred and fifty or thereabouts, and a following of smaller craft. Altogether, the Infidels had a more numerous fleet; but they had not ships so powerful as the League's heaviest, and their artillery was less effective. Ali Pasha was in command. Hassan Pasha, who had been viceroy of Algiers; Mahomet Sirocco Pasha, Governor of Alexandria; and Hamet Bey, Governor of Negropont, were his chief officers. Aluch Ali, viceroy of Algiers, commanded the squadron of his province.

In one respect the Sultan's fleet had an immense advantage over its antagonist fleet. Every captain in it obeyed the will of one man, and had no desire but for such a result as would give the greatest satisfaction. Whereas, in the allied fleet of the League, every admiral was solicitous for the honour of his own flag, and the advantage of his own nation. This inherent weakness, the source of much trouble and danger, would have been fatal, had it not been rectified by the tact, courtesy, and determination of Don John of Austria.

Before the fleets left Messina, Don John was assailed by a perplexity in which the mind of a weaker man would certainly have been misled. He became aware that the old Spanish officers were very much disposed to avoid a battle, at any rate for some time. They thought that the interests and the reputation of Spain would suffer more by a defeat or a disadvantage than they could gain by a victory. They were impressed by the belief that the Infidel fleet was far more powerful than that of the League. Their counsel, therefore, was to observe and impede

the enemy as much as possible, without staking everything upon the issue of a fleet action; and to use any opportunity that might present itself of capturing squadrons or seizing seaports. The counsellors who thus spoke and wrote, knew of course full well that the Pope's heart was set upon inflicting, with the great armament, a signal punishment on the heathen; also that it was matter of life or death to Venice, whether the power of the Turk should or should not now be effectually broken. Yet it was their selfish policy to give little heed to the needs or wishes of Spain's allies, and to act solely with a view to the interests of Spain herself. Now Don John was a very young man, and, though Captain-General of the League, he was also the brother of the King of Spain. It is therefore highly to his honour, that in these the early days of his expedition he put from him selfish and partial considerations, and determined to carry out loyally the great designs of the League; and that he assured Veniero and Colonna of his determination to seek the enemy for the purpose of bringing him to action.

Don John now issued special and detailed instructions to the fleet, which were to regulate the discipline, the order of sailing, and especially to govern officers in a general action with the enemy. After that, the great forest of masts left the harbour, and proceeded, by what we should call very easy cruises, to Corfu. Here intelligence, on which the chiefs thought they could rely, was received to the effect that the Turkish fleet was somewhere in the Gulf of Lepanto. Hereupon was called a council of war, which was numerously attended, and wherein it was earnestly debated whether,

now that the enemy was apparently within reach, battle should be offered to him at once. The same timid counsels which had been heard at Messina were again plentifully offered, and now, in the critical moment, many minds—usually firm enough—shrank from the enormous hazard of a general battle. The Captain-General is said by every chronicler but one, to have advocated immediate action. In this opinion he was strenuously supported by the Venetian and Papal admirals. The three chiefs carried the council with them; and it was now known throughout the fleet that the great struggle would immediately be made.

In pursuance of this resolve, the ships made for a harbour on the Albanian coast; and here Don John's temper was sorely tried by some acts of ruffianism, and indeed of insubordination, which were committed by the Venetian Veniero. The fiery old chieftain had, in a fit of rage, hanged at his yard-arms some Spaniards who had been lent him from the royal forces to complete his muster-rolls. He had done this without reference to the Captain-General. The proceeding might have been followed by disastrous consequences but for the extreme self-control exhibited by Don John, who would not, in presence, as it were, of the foe, allow any dispute to interfere with the great work which had been taken on hand. After reflecting on the matter, he expressed his displeasure, and forbade Veniero to take his place at the council board.

In this harbour Don John reviewed his fleet, and we are informed that many men were accidentally killed by careless firing in the salutes with which he was received. Soldiers and sailors were, it appears, continually lost to the service in this way—which argues

that the arms were not very good nor the hands very steady.

It took some days to reach Lepanto, although everything was done to save time. During this interval, fresh reports were received of the Turks being still at Lepanto. And then came another fearful report, brought by a cruiser from Candia, which told how a consummately cruel massacre of noble Venetians, attended by a gross violation of a compact, had lately been perpetrated at Famagosta, in Cyprus. Every soul in the fleet, but especially every Venetian, was struck with horror and wrought to fury by the recital of the barbarous crime; and all vowed to retaliate upon the Infidel the wrongs which the servants of the Republic had suffered. The news could scarcely have arrived more opportunely.

On Sunday the 7th of October 1571, the combined fleets of the Holy League entered the Gulf of Lepanto in search of the enemy. The forethought of Don John had not only prescribed the order of battle, but had likewise caused excellent arrangements to be made in each vessel for facilitating the movements of the warriors and for giving refreshment to the fatigued and aid to the wounded. He caused nettings to be put up to baffle attempts at boarding; and he removed the sharp beaks of his galleys, by which arrangement, though he lost the power of ramming, he gained great command for his fore-castle guns—indeed he gained much more than he relinquished. Scouts on shore and lookout-men at the mast-heads strained their gaze in search of hostile sails; and it was not long before the leading ships of the Sultan's fleet were described. All was now ardent expectation until the hulks of the great body of the

ships were above the horizon, and it was apparent that the Turks meant fighting as determinedly as the Christians. Then the banner of the League was run up to the maintop of the Captain-General, and a gun from the flag-ship was the signal to prepare for action. The enthusiasm was now intense, and the eager shouts pealing from all the ships together, woke the thousand echoes of the gulf in presentiment of victory.¹

Rapidly the ships formed three divisions in line. Doria commanded that on the right; Barbarigo that on the left; in the centre was Don John himself, supported by Veniero and Colonna. Santa Cruz followed with a reserve squadron. In front of the whole line were towed some heavily armed *galasses*, which were expected to do much execution on the enemy's first closing, as he was not provided with heavy ships of that build.

On the Turkish side the admiral directed the centre; the Pasha of Alexandria the right; and Aluch Ali, the Algerine, the left. The smaller craft were in rear. The Turks, as well as the Christians, were in high spirits, and confident of victory.

After the fleets were in sight of each other, there were still many miles of sea to be passed before they could be at fighting distance; so that there was time to make all necessary preparations. The chiefs of the expedition repaired to the flag-ship to receive last orders; and, even now, with the enemy in sight, there were some counsellors who would have had Don John avoid

the battle. But he answered shortly and courteously that the question of fighting had been decided at Corfu, and that the time for action had come. Don John, sheathed in complete armour, now went on board a light frigate, and in her passed rapidly along the whole force which sailed to the right of his flag-ship; while Requesens, his second in command, made a similar passage along the left. They spoke a few words of encouragement to the officers and men, and in that way roused the ardour of the crews to the highest pitch. And Don John, remembering the estrangement which there had been between himself and the Venetian admiral, did not fail to pass in this supreme moment under the stern of Veniero's galley, and to reciprocate some words of kindness with the hot-tempered veteran.

As the distance decreased, the Turks made all the noise they could, by shouting, screaming, the clang of arms and of cymbals, and by useless discharge of firearms. In contrast to all this savage din, the crews of the League preserved a stern silence. A crucifix was elevated in the flag-ship, then in all the other vessels; and every man, from the Commander-in-Chief downward, knelt in adoration and implored the help of Heaven. This ceremony over, the Christian trumpets sounded and the bands played. Don John, and some of his younger officers, are said to have danced on the deck in the revelry of their brimming spirits. But the time for earnest work was now at hand.

¹ "Rarely in history had so gorgeous a scene of martial array been witnessed. An October sun gilded the thousand beauties of an Ionian landscape. Athens and Corinth were behind the combatants; the mountains of Alexander's Macedon rose in the distance; the rock of Sappho and the heights of Actium were before their eyes. Since the day when the world had been lost and won beneath that famous promontory, no such combat as the one now approaching had been fought upon the waves."—*Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Part V. chap. i.

The battle was joined with the greatest ardour. In the wings there was some manœuvring, either side hoping to gain an advantage by seamanship; but in the centre the ships sought each other with direct and fearful attack. They came on with sparkling armour, many-coloured plumes, floating banners—a glorious sight, which was soon to be turned to a ruin of death and wreck. Once the lines were engaged, the battle was a collection of combats of yessels in pairs. The commanders sought each other, and the encounter of the flag-ships is that which is shown to us as the most brilliant and obstinate of the day. As the deck on either side was cleared by balls, or arrows, or by the rush of the boarders, it was remanned from some of the smaller craft, and the battle renewed. So it was with the ships all over the fleet. The slaughter was immense. The decks ran blood and reddened the waters. Pity was not there. The disabled, the wounded, were slain and cast to the waves. One has seldom read of such havoc.

The first great witness of victory was seen in the hauling down of the standard of the Prophet on board the Turkish flag-ship, and the running up of a cross in its place. The Infidel admiral had fallen, had been put to death, and his galley was taken. In almost every combat the result was against the Turks, who fought bravely and obstinately, nevertheless. Their ships were sunk or their crews were destroyed. As the League began to get the upper hand, two Christian ships could often assail one Turkish galley, and so make sure of overpowering it. The success of the centre of the combined fleets had scarcely been doubtful from the first.

It was otherwise with the wings. Barbarigo was wounded to death

early in the battle, and it went hard for a time with his division. But his crews were Venetian, animated not only by a thirst for honour, but also by an implacable desire of vengeance for the diabolical cruelties inflicted on their countrymen in Cyprus. They rallied and turned the tide of battle. They neither asked nor gave quarter. The Pasha of Alexandria fell, as did nearly all his chiefs and captains. There was no withstanding the Venetian fury. At last the Turkish right wing was in as bad case as the Turkish centre.

If there were any remissness in the Christian host it was in Don John's right wing, where Doria was either over-cautious or over-matched in seamanship; for the Viceroy of Algiers contrived to get round his flank and finally to escape, being one of the very few Pashas who came safe and sound out of this fiercely fought battle.

The battle began about half an hour after noon and ended at four o'clock, by which time death, carnage, and wreck made the face of the bay for miles such a scene as has been seldom witnessed in the history of the world. Notwithstanding the destruction, enormous spoil was acquired by the victors, for the Turks of all ranks had a habit of taking their money to sea with them, as well as wares of the richest and most splendid kind. Prisoners, held to ransom or sold for slaves, were also productive of an immense booty. Two sons of the Turkish admiral were taken alive in one of the captured ships. They were disposed of by Don John as his own prize, and he generously protected them. One died in Italy, the other he set at liberty. Indeed, his behaviour, with regard to the results of the great sea-fight, was eminently generous and chivalrous.

Many wonderful acts of individual heroism are recorded, but the particulars of most of them are very harrowing, and we do not feel disposed to repeat the detail of them. The not-unmatched adventure of a female sailor and warrior having served all through the action is an incident of Lepanto. Another noteworthy incident is that the author of 'Don Quixote' was a combatant and was wounded in the fight. It could hardly have occurred to any mind in the vast Christian armament that a private sentinel there present would shortly with his quill win a fame which would spread farther than, and last as long as, the renown of their great admiral! Sword and pen, we perceive, were represented in this great fight, each by one of its most glorious votaries. The Captain-General, in his despatches, greatly extolled the gallantry of all under his command. He was four-and-twenty years of age; he had won a sea-battle which must always be famous; and his own courage and conduct had contributed in a principal degree to the glorious issue.

To obtain any idea of the *furor* which this victory awakened all over Europe, it is necessary first to realise the terror inspired by the Turks of those days, when the Grand Signior was not "a sick man," but the most formidable and most dreaded of potentates. Perhaps the relief which the victory of the Nile brought to the despair of the Western Powers, then aghast at the prevailing fury of the French Revolution, comes near to that which followed Lepanto. The cannon of Nelson, as historians assure us, resounded over all Europe; in the same way, and for a similar reason, the cannon and the achievement of Don John were the great theme of the time, were

for words in the mouth of every one. The victor was, for a season, at the very summit of European fame. He sent the green standard of the Prophet to King Philip, the Sultan's banner to the Pope, and letters of felicitation to the Emperor and the Doge of Venice. But one reads with pleasure that, in the hour of his supreme success, he wrote a special despatch to gentle Doña Magdalena.

After a few rather feeble essays after further action, the fleets separated and sailed to winter quarters, Don John returning to Messina.

Religion, sculpture, painting, poetry had now only one subject, the victory and the victors of Lepanto. The capitals of the south of Europe shone and resounded with the signs of triumph. Holiday was universally indulged in, and Church ceremonies shared with brilliant *fetes* the waking hours of civic multitudes. Presents, decorations, addresses were events of every day. An ovation was decreed to Colonna in the Eternal City; and now it was that Pope Pius made his remarkable application of the Scriptural passage, "Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Joannes." Don John's first reception, and a magnificent one it was, was given to him at Messina. It was only the first of many tributes, in offering which the cities of the South vied with each other in pomp and in the attribution of praise. The young conqueror's head was not turned with all the worship that he received, which shows how strong and well-balanced a head it was. But the head, without any flightiness, and with the highest warrant for the dream, did now seriously incline to the belief that it would shortly be surmounted by a territorial

crown. This seemed in that romantic age the proper outcome of events. The public mind was agreed that a kingdom must be found for the hero. Where the kingdom was to be, or how it was to be instituted, was not so clearly understood. Some Albanians, who believed that the Turkish rule on the shore of the Adriatic would now be immediately ended, came and offered their homage to Don John, and he was not indisposed to accept it; but his brother Philip did not enter very heartily into the project, and events fell out far otherwise than was expected immediately after Lepanto.

Indeed the conclusion of the Holy League was lame and impotent, in no wise corresponding to the vigorous achievement which had marked its beginning. In 1572, Pope Pius, the soul of the confederation, died. His successor was most zealous in his endeavour to repel the Infidel, but the crusading spirit and power seemed not to be in him. Through that summer again the great fleets were at sea, but they did nothing of importance, and the great opportunity of striking while the enemy was discouraged by the victory of Lepanto was lost. There was no triumph to record for 1572; and before operations could be undertaken in 1573, Venice had made a separate peace with the Turks, thus shamefully deserting her allies. Therefore, as no other Power had shown any anxiety to enter the League, that holy combination, so solemnly and vauntingly inaugurated, came of necessity to an end. Its banner was hauled down, and Don John ran up his flag as Spanish General of the Sea once more.

For a year or two after the dissolution of the Holy League, Don John's life passed, for the most

part peaceably, in the enjoyment of his fame. He was charged with the conduct of affairs in various places, and he retained his naval command. He made an easy capture of Tunis, and placed on its throne a king who was to rule under the protection of the King of Spain; but this acquisition remained to Spain only for a short time, as Tunis was retaken by the Turks. The occupations of the young general seem, however, to have left him time for participating very frequently in amusements; and of many of these, our author, as we think, has done well to speak at some length. The shows called masques were often the principal entertainments, and they entered into and formed part of pleasures and sports which, in other times, would probably have dispensed with them. For instance, balls and tournaments were incomplete if not largely decorated with allegorical figures and devices. Dancing was a very favourite amusement of Don John; and very splendid balls were given to him in many of the cities to which his duties called him. At Piacenza a magnificent tournament was held by the Duke of Parma in his honour as the first knight in Christendom: the account of it is interesting, as showing how this pastime of nobles and knights had changed its character since the times when it was thought to be a serious, as it was certainly a somewhat sanguinary diversion. The Duke's passage of arms may not unfairly be bracketed with a tournament which was held in Scotland in this nineteenth century.

The military pageant was formally brought to pass by the action of a challenger, who proclaimed to all the world of chivalry the charms and virtues of his mistress, and who undertook to

meet in arms any and every champion who might wish to dispute this lady's pre-eminence on behalf of any other lady, on Thursday, the 29th of July. Four prizes were offered: one to him who should best break a lance; one to the best swordsman; a third to the best knight in the general combat; another to him who should be most bravely equipped. A notification was given of the strokes that would be considered foul. A master of the tournament was appointed. Judges were nominated. And it was made known to what distinguished men and their retainers would be confided the keeping of the lists.

Don John was received at Piacenza by his entertainers with much splendour and ceremony. There was a perpetual *fete* during his stay; and on the 29th July, according to appointment, the tournament took place. It were too long to tell here of all the allegorical and martial figures which graced the meeting; but we may assist our readers to form an idea of the whole sight if we cite the appearance of the challenger, who, by the way, chose to call himself "the Destined Knight." He was

"preceded by four drummers and four trumpeters in red and white liveries, sounding their warlike notes before a car or an architecturally decorated platform, on which stood three figures representing the three Fates, attired in various symbolical colours. In addition to the seven planets which formed the diadem of the Fate Clotho, seven beautiful boys were arranged round the car as the representatives of Saturn and his companion stars. The black and white horses which drew the car were driven by a man dressed as Time. The machine was followed by a couple of pages in red and white, carrying the lance and the gauntlets of their master. Then came two gentlemen, his seconds, or god-

fathers as they were called, in crimson and cloth-of-gold. Last of all came the Knight of Destiny himself, resplendent in crimson and gold, with a mighty plume of white and crimson, and bearing on his arm a shield, on which were depicted the seven stars forming Charles's Wain, with the motto *Ipsa ducente*. Reining in his steeds before the royal box, Time recited some verses, in which he informed the public that by the command of Destiny, he had brought thither a knight who, for the sake of his lady, was about to display prowess such as the world had never yet beheld. The cavalcade then passed round the list, and the defender placed himself in his appointed station."

His pageant was followed by many more such, whereof one group was expressly intended to symbolise the victory of Lepanto. "The judicious Knight made his entry in the bowels of a moving mountain, up which Sisyphus was seen rolling his intractable stone." An enchanted tower, which burst asunder and vanished in a blaze of fireworks, came to delight the spectators; and the car of Jove himself was there, with a hundred other triumphs of art.

Don John sate beside the Portuguese Infanta while the pageant was unfolding; but, on the entrance of three dashing knights who were going to contend, his Highness was seized with an overpowering desire to enter the lists with them, which he presently did. "All came in black armour inlaid with gold. The crest of the most serene Don John was of black plumes garnished with gold, with certain yellow and white banderoles, and a single long drooping white feather. . . . His Highness wore breeches, cut in sailor's fashion, of black velvet richly worked in gold and silver." It seems to have been a very harmless jousting. Don John got the prize for the lance. There was a

melee, and some sword-play, making, we doubt not, glorious diversion.

The purple light in which he basked for only a few months was the sole recompense of his surpassing achievement. The kind fairy, while he was enjoying himself in Italy, had come to the term of her glittering endowments. A less benevolent spirit was about to take her place. And the favoured knight who had been wafted to rank and fame by the quickest and easiest of ascents, was now, after a brief enjoyment of silken pleasures, to become acquainted, ere his youth had passed, with adversity—to drag out his few days in labour and sorrow—and to sink below the horizon ere the noontide of his manhood.

With Tunis was lost a possible kingdom for Don John, who had conceived the idea of making it the capital of his dominion. He had not, however, long suffered the frustration of his hopes in that direction before another day dream which seemed full of promise was set before him. Some wandering English and Irish Catholics made proposals to him to raise an army for the purpose of invading England or Ireland, and, by the aid of the native Papists, conquering those kingdoms. He was to deliver Mary Queen of Scots from captivity, set her on the throne of Elizabeth, and then marry her. The Pope, as he was informed, would certainly second his efforts to win back the British Isles to the Catholic faith; moreover, the overthrow of Queen Elizabeth would remove one of the chief supports of the rebellion against his brother Philip, which had been for a long time active in the Netherlands. There is no doubt that the King of Spain, who had, as "bloody" Mary's husband, once

been King-Consort of England, entertained serious thoughts of overthrowing the Protestant Queen; but he does not appear, when the temptation was first suggested to Don John, to have wished his brother to be an actor in that business—knowing which disinclination, the hero of Lepanto again cast his eyes over the Levant and the shores of the Mediterranean generally, in search of a realm. He thought it not impossible that out of the Italian States, or even out of some of the Spanish dominions, a kingdom might be carved for him.

But Philip was overruled by events, and he felt compelled ere long to look with some favour on the project of marrying Don John to the Scottish Queen. He made no progress at all in pacifying the Low Countries, and the sudden death of his lieutenant there rendered necessary a new appointment to the viceroyalty of those dominions. Not unnaturally, now that operations by sea were not being prosecuted with much vigour, the King turned to his now famous half-brother, as his best resource for ensuring the able government of the Netherlands. Accordingly, he informed him of the employment which he designed for him, and desired that he would set off with dispatch, because a commander was urgently required there—and with secrecy and without parade, because a quiet and unostentatious appearance among the Netherlands might be evidence that the new commander threw himself into their midst without hostility or suspicion. The King was under the impression (which proved to be a most erroneous one) that ships and troops, ostensibly assembled in the Netherlands for the repression of insurrection, might be available

for the invasion of the British Islands ; and he now sanctioned an attempt in this direction, lending, at the same time, his countenance to the project of the marriage of Queen Mary to John of Austria. Elizabeth was believed by Philip to be the real mover and supporter of the insurrection in the Low Countries. It was therefore regarding her as a political enemy and not only as a heretic, that he began to entertain designs upon her power, of which the Invincible Armada was the great and final outcome.

The troubles of King Philip in his Netherland dominions may be said in brief to have sprung mainly from religious intolerance and from his having introduced the Inquisition into those provinces. He was ignorant of the people whose religion he sought to dictate to them. He knew not how to conciliate them. He seems, moreover, to have had but a sorry idea of how to override and crush them ; for, want of despatch, a short supply of money, and scarcity of munitions of war, caused many of his tyrannical enterprises to miscarry. Though he studied the arts of dissimulation and of despotism, nothing could be more stupid in both these respects than his government of the Low Provinces. They were so well disposed to his house that he might have won them if he would but have treated them with some consideration ; they had so small an idea of political freedom, and they had so many distractions among them, that he might have got them under his heel by force had he known how to bear them down with the military power which he undoubtedly possessed. In effect, he, by his imbecile course of feeble oppression, taught them in the course of his reign the aspirations of a free people.

He sometimes cajoled and deceived, he sometimes bullied. He tried to rule through Cardinal Granvelle, and he tried to rule through the Duke of Alva. All his attempts failed, as they could not but do, they were so ill executed, owing principally to his own shortcomings. Alva had been withdrawn after failure. Requesens, whom we saw as Don John's lieutenant at Lepanto, succeeded him, made one or two efforts in the field, and then died suddenly. The King's cause was already lost, and the King had not acquired one wise idea as to the reason of his failure, when he called on his brother to go and assume the viceroyalty.

Don John did not know that he was going to his detriment and his death when he set out for his new charge ; but he knew much better than the King did how little chance he had of winning honour, and he went unwillingly. Perhaps the poor hope of Mary's crown, to be obtained through a Spanish invasion and an English rising of Catholics, was his secret encouragement to try his best. The King, somewhat alarmed at the critical state of things, would have had his new viceroy set off at once ; but Don John, spite of positive orders to the contrary, went to Madrid before proceeding northward, to inform himself as accurately as possible of his brother's mind, and to press certain views of his own, which he regarded as of the first importance. His disobedience was not resented ; he was allowed to stay a short time at Court ; and he found an opportunity of paying a visit to Doña Magdalena, whom he saw for the last time.

He set off, as had been before determined, with a very small retinue. He himself travelled disguised as a Moorish slave. The

journey, under these circumstances, was tedious, disagreeable, and full of hazard. Nevertheless the adventurers arrived safely at Paris, where Don John had the comfort of conversing confidentially with the Spanish Minister, although, to the world at large, he still passed for a slave. Having been admitted *incognito* to a royal ball, he there saw, and was captivated by the beautiful Margaret, Queen of Navarre, whom he was destined to see yet again. Arrived at Luxembourg, he became aware that he would have done better if he had repaired to his viceroyalty at once, instead of incurring delay by going into Spain. For things had gone most unfortunately in the few days preceding his arrival. The Spanish troops, mutinous for want of pay, had fallen upon and sacked the city of Antwerp. And the tale of their lawlessness and ferocity was the first information that greeted his ears.

It would require more space than we have left disposable to give anything like a clear account of the deplorable course of things in the Low Countries after Don John showed himself, and went through the forms of assuming the government. The sceptre had, in truth, already departed from his house; and the short span that remained to him of life was to be fretted away in useless negotiations, barren plans, and military attempts made without necessary money or munitions. Very soon after his arrival he was attacked by fever; and it may be said that, at that first attack, his health really gave way, although he was able to return to his duty, and to impress those whom he met in public by his still charming manners, his gaiety, and his accomplishments. Had he been well supplied with funds, and allowed

to follow the dictates of his own good sense, it is possible that he might have retrieved matters for Philip; but he was tied and straitened in such a way as to leave him no possible chance of success. Very early in his viceroyalty, old acquaintances, who saw him again, remarked how he had deteriorated in appearance and spirits. His office lasted for a period of something less than two years, and it was a time of wasting, of disappointment, and of failure.

Two or three bright spots there were amid the gloom of his administration. The gay Queen of Navarre, hoping to make for one of her brothers some capital out of the troubles of the Netherlands, found it advisable to repair to the waters of Spa. She travelled in gorgeous state, having three horse-litters, six carriages, ten maids-of-honour on horseback, and a very large retinue of noble attendants. Don John met the fair traveller on her journey from Mons to Namur, and rode beside her litter, overcome by her beauty and fascinations. The Queen was for grace and beauty accounted the *nonpareille* of Europe. Her present admirer was the greatest hero then alive. It was the chivalric dream realised of the bravest of the brave and the fairest of the fair. No doubt the youth and natural gaiety of the great commander then won a few hours of delight from his cares as the enchantress looked out upon him from her litter, "glorious in the July light, with its gilded pillars, crimson hangings, and glasses painted with forty different solar emblems, with their mottoes in Italian and Spanish."

He entertained "the fair mischief" for two or three days, at Namur, with great magnificence, giving her banquets, a *fete champetre*, and balls. The Queen was

as celebrated for her dancing as Don John himself ; and when these illustrious personages danced together, they made a sight for spectators to remember—

“So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace.”

The rose-coloured days and nights were, however, soon over. The warrior put this Helen of her day on board her boat for Liège, looked on her beauty for the last time as he bade her farewell, and went back to the cares and the fatigues that were robbing him of his youth and life.

Throughout his viceroyalty Don John seems to have kept up a correspondence, most insincere on both sides, with Queen Elizabeth of England. Don John, as we have seen, intended, if he could, to invade the Queen's dominions, raise her Catholic subjects, and dethrone her. Elizabeth, who quite suspected his designs, was aiding the Netherlanders in their resistance to Don John's government. Yet the correspondence breathes only good will and flattery.

At the annual sports at Louvain Don John appeared with his cross-bow and brought down the popinjay. The enraptured multitude shouted ; he was proclaimed king of the bowmen, and he enjoyed a temporary popularity during the holiday season.

We shall furnish an example of the real ability that was in the young man if we extract the account of his dealing with a serious military revolt :—

“While he lay before Nivelles, Don John was called upon to suppress a mutiny. It arose from the old cause, long-deferred pay, and broke out in one of the German regiments. The

demand of the soldiers was, immediate payment of arrears or leave to pillage the town ; and the alternative was proposed to Don John by a deputation of the mutineers. He dismissed them with fair words, which gave them some hope of gaining one or other of their wishes, and then ordered the colonel, the Baron of Meghem, a courageous and trustworthy officer, to take the companies which had not joined the mutiny, and some other troops, and occupy certain points on the roads leading to Antwerp and Bruxelles. The malcontents, thus left isolated in their quarters, were soon after surrounded by an overwhelming force of other regiments, and ordered to give up their arms and the names of the ringleaders. The order was complied with, and twelve of the chief mutineers were arrested, of whom four, selected by lot, were condemned to death. Two of these were pardoned on the petition of the other regiments ; and of the remaining two, one was also forgiven on account of his wounds and good service. The sedition was therefore quelled by the vigorous measures of the general, at the expense of a single victim.”

Chiefly by the readiness and conduct of Prince Alexander of Parma, Don John, towards the end of his administration, gained a considerable military advantage over the rebel army at Gembloura. But it was not a success sufficient to turn the tide of his ill-fortune or to make him cling to life. From time to time, during his employment in the Low Countries, he suffered from weakening attacks of fever ; and in the autumn of 1578 he was prostrated by a recurrence of the disease, which proved too much for his enfeebled constitution to withstand. He had repaired to a camp which he was constructing about a mile from Namur ; and it was there, in an outbuilding which had been hastily made somewhat decent for his reception, that he underwent his last

illness and met his end. The sad story of his death affords another instance of the vanity of fame and greatness. Foiled, suspected at the Spanish Court of disloyalty, unsupported by his brother, wasted in body, and, as one may fairly infer, broken-hearted, the hero of Lepanto yielded up his breath at the age of thirty-one, having in that short life attained to the very pinnacle of fame, and again been reduced to bid willingly "farewell, a long farewell, to all his greatness."

In the days of autumn there had gathered about him a gloom which was in truth the shadow of death. His letters written in September reveal the state of his mind. There is one to a nobleman at Genoa, another to his old comrade Doria, who was also then at Genoa, and a third to King Philip—all very pathetic. Indeed, we have it on the authority of his confessor, that he by this time looked upon his death as very near, and that he was devoting himself more and more to religion. In the last days of September he received the holy sacrament, and a few days after extreme unction. He charged the confessor to make known to his brother his last wishes, which had reference chiefly to the resting-place of his body, and to provision for his suite. Towards the last he was visited by alternate fits of pain and of delirium, and, while distracted in mind, issued orders to his captains as if he were in the field, found fault with what seemed to be going wrong, or lifted up his voice in shouts of victory. His mind was clear at the very end. After his sight failed, Mass was celebrated in his chamber, and he died peacefully grasping the crucifix, and with the names of Mary and Jesus just uttered.

The remains of the dead warrior

were at first interred at Namur—the obsequies being solemnised with much military and civil pomp. He had, however, before his death, petitioned King Philip to have his bones deposited by those of his imperial father in the Escorial, which was eventually done. But the transfer of the body from Namur to its Spanish resting-place was effected in a manner consistent with Philip's parsimonious and occult methods—one which made chances, which would be considered extravagant even in a romance, fall to the hero after he was dead. The corpse was cut in pieces at the joints, and placed in three leather bags—each of which was carried across France at the saddle-bow of a rider as part of the baggage of his late household, the members of which returned home under the steward. Arrived near the Escorial, the parts were fitted together again, and consigned to the tomb with all the honour usually paid to the remains of a royal personage. He was one of the last paladins. A spell of elf-land seemed to be on him from his cradle to his second grave. He flourished for a while, and his crest mounted to the clouds. But the chills of adversity came early to his blossom; the wind blew over him, and he was gone. The close of his story, like the falling of the curtain on some thrilling, unsubstantial pageant, makes the heart ache with a sense of bereavement.

When we have considered all the characters so graphically presented in this history, we must certainly find that Don John of Austria, whatever may have been his faults, was worthy of much admiration. The age in which he lived appears to have been, as far as the Spanish dominions and connections were concerned, one of cruelty, selfish-

ness, intrigue, insincerity, and suspicion; yet throughout he was loyal, single-hearted, and, where left to himself, truthful. For his good qualities he seems to have been much indebted to Quixada and Magdalena, as if they, devoted, benevolent, honest, gracious, had been sent into the world specially that he might become more generous than other men. Quixada and his wife, in their admirable qualities, are quite exceptional persons. That Don John was brave is a point not so much to be remarked on, for bravery was certainly by no means rare in his day. Venetians, Genoese, Romans, Spaniards, all were, in his fleet, men of courage and endurance.

That Don John was quick and decided in matters of duty, and that he could be pitiful and merciful, are the traits which most distinguish him from his fellow-warriors. And his aptitude for command must have been a natural gift: as a youth he could sway, and cause to act together, rugged natures, in a manner which many a leader cannot acquire after decades passed in camps and combats. At Lepanto, although he had at hand the experience of the veterans Requesens and Santa Cruz to lean upon, if he had required and chosen, there was not a sign of his being the scion of royalty sent to win fame through the agency of men abler than himself. On the contrary, he not only directed his fleet as far as any commander could, but he fought his flag-ship himself, never asking or accepting advice, and so did his work that grim old warriors were astonished at his achievements. Had Philip not been so pitiful a character, he, with such a brother under him to wield loyally the forces of Spain, might have changed the face of Europe, and perhaps established that rule

over the Western world which some observers thought to be destined for the House of Austria.

Besides admiring his heroism, we must sympathise with Don John in sentiments not purely heroic. It is through these, probably, that he touches our hearts, more than by his exploits. The dutiful affection which he always rendered to his foster-parents, and his devotion to Doña Magdalena to his life's end, will, to many a tender breast, make his glorious deeds look exceeding glorious, and will cause even censorious minds to tolerate his fame.

The work before us, from which we have been endeavouring to draw out in little the thread of the principal character's career, is in reality a history of Europe for the eleven years from 1567 to 1578. Events of the period are so varied in place and in character, that interest in the narrative is kept ever alive. The Morisco rebellion, the naval war with the Turks, the intrigues of the Italian States, the settlements of pirates along the North African shores, the struggles caused by the Reformation in Northern Europe, engage in succession the reader's attention. He is made to see, too, the difficult position of the Court of Rome between the threatening infidels on the one hand and the reformers on the other. No narration could be less smothered with Dryasdust inflictions; and yet this is full of didactic illustrations of the ancient life, political, military, and social, of those stirring times. It is remarkable that England in those days stood aloof from the politics regarding the Turk, which were engrossing Southern Europe, and indeed the greater part of Europe. The English appear to have lost the crusading spirit by that time, and to have

troubled themselves but little concerning what was doing in the Levant. Hence the fame of Don John of Austria was less celebrated in these islands than on the Continent; and hence, perhaps, no Englishman of former times troubled himself to compile a history of that commander. It is a matter of wonder that Shakespeare, who was so prompt to gather and to use the striking stories and events of the world, had not something interesting to say of such a man as Don John and such a victory as Lepanto. The explanation must be that we did not regard the battle as of much importance to us, and that we had but little sympathy with "the bragging Spaniard."

Sir William Stirling-Maxwell has not only given us the results of careful study and patient judgment; he has in large measure supplied, and he has most copiously indicated in his appendix, the sources from which the history of the times with which he deals is to be obtained. He has enriched his work with copies of portraits, of curious medals, of arms, and of trophies. Indeed he has done all that was possible to place the whole of his subject before his reader, and to save the trouble of reference and verification. We do not think that he has so much presented to us new facts, or new views of the time of which he treats, as that he has raised a new and proper interest in a time which is eminently worthy of a student's regard. We have heard of such thing as a biographer choosing his subject that

he might set up an idol, execute literary fetich-rites himself, and endeavour to make his readers idolaters. This has not been Sir William Stirling-Maxwell's failing. He has observed towards Don John the strictest fairness and impartiality, and not forgotten that he owed a duty to his readers as well as to his hero. In traversing a field so wide as that which his history covers, he cannot but have formed and expressed opinions of persons and events from which many may differ; yet the most uncompromising dissentient ought to, and probably would, admit that he has done all in a laudable and equitable spirit.

The style of the book is, in our opinion, happy. The narration is lively and entertaining; but the dignity and sobriety which become history are nowhere wanting. Clearly, the matter to be told was, in the author's mind, more important than the manner of telling; and yet the manner is worthy of much commendation. Some of the war scenes are depicted with great force; the description of the waters of Lepanto, covered with wreck after the great action, being very picturesque. The accounts of shows and pageants are all lively and impressive. The notices of the life and death of Pope Pius V. are attractive pieces. Whether or not, before this book was published, the public were aware how much such a work was wanted, certain it is that, having such a work, the public will consider no library complete, on the shelves of which 'Don John of Austria' has not a place.

ENGLAND :

UNDER THE FOREIGN AND COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION OF
MR GLADSTONE, LORD GRANVILLE, AND
LORD DERBY.

Down, England, down !
Thou hast fallen from thy place,—
Thou hast slumbered in the race ;
No longer art thou foremost—thou hast lost thy victor crown !
Thine arm is set at nought,
And the wrong thing may be wrought,
And no one seeks thy favour, or trembles at thy frown :
Mankind have learned to doubt thee,
And thy hungry rivals flout thee,
Crying, “ Down with England, down ! ”

Down, England, down !
Thou hast lost thy pith of old,—
Thou hast learned to value gold
More than honour, more than virtue, more than ancient high renown.
If thy citizens can thrive,
And amuse themselves, and wive,
Making cent per cent or fifty, growing fat in bower and town,
What to thee are truth's foundations,
And the scorn of hostile nations,
Crying, “ Down with England, down ! ”

Down, England, down !
Thy statesmen fall asleep,
Or go bleating like to sheep,
In the warm and juicy meadows, when the summer leaves grow brown;
And they prattle of sweet peace,
And the happy world's increase,

While the wolves and jackals sniff, howling, prowling up and down ;
And smile with dreary wonder
At the long low rumbling thunder,
Muttering, " Down with England, down ! "

Down, England, down !
There is but one first place
In the world's perpetual race ;
Thou hadst it, noble England,—thou hadst the wreath and crown ;
Thou hadst them and hast lost them,—
To the wild winds thou hast tost them,
For any foe to pluck from the depths in which they drown ;
To wear them and possess them,
The whole world crying, " Bless them,"
And " Down with England, down ! "

CHARLES MACKAY.

MR CHAMBERLAIN AND THE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY.

WE shall scarcely be accused of sympathy with Mr Chamberlain or his opinions, when we express regret that during the past two years so many attacks should have been made upon him in his public capacity, and that even his private affairs should have been made the subject of adverse comment. Our regret, however, with respect to these two methods of attack, springs from different sources. We regard it as wholly unjustifiable to rake up private matters, and to hint or insinuate suspicions, possibly without any reasonable foundation, as to affairs with which the public have nothing to do. The political life of a man is public property; his private life should be safe from intrusion, and good policy as well as good feeling should protect it from those who are honestly at war with the politician, but have no enmity to the man.

Our objection to the frequency of the attacks upon the political acts and speeches of Mr Chamberlain, rests upon a widely different foundation, and is to be found in the simple fact that they invest him with a fictitious importance, and hold him up before the eyes of the people as a person of far greater consequence than he really is. For, when all has been said and done, Mr Chamberlain is not a great man. Until his entry into the House of Commons in 1876, he was but little known beyond Birmingham circles; and between that time and the dissolution of 1880, his legislative actions were *nil*, and his speeches neither many in number nor remarkable in any sense of the word, if we omit the celebrated insult to Lord Hartington, who was stigmatised by his present colleague

as "the late leader of the Opposition," because he ventured to lead in a direction which that colleague of three years' parliamentary experience disapproved. Nay, more; although we are ready to give Mr Chamberlain credit for official zeal and industry since his unprecedented leap at one bound into the seat of a Cabinet Minister, we cannot forget that, so far as legislative achievements are concerned, his performances have been meagre indeed; and that, whilst it remains to be seen whether his efforts at the amendment of our Bankruptcy Laws will add to his reputation or injuriously affect it, his failures in the attempt to deal with the Shipping and Railway questions have been heavy and disastrous, and his manner of making those attempts has met with severe criticism even from some Radical members of Parliament who would gladly have welcomed his success.

We repeat, therefore, that Mr Chamberlain is not a great man, and in spite of an extraordinary amount of assurance, and a considerable fluency of speech, has evinced none of the qualities of greatness during his brief parliamentary career. Nevertheless, the public utterances of Mr Chamberlain demand consideration at the present moment, because he who utters them is a member of Mr Gladstone's Cabinet; and as "in the country of the blind the one-eyed is king," so in counsels where weakness, vacillation, and timidity abound, self-assurance and self-will have so undue a share of influence, that it is well to ascertain and gauge the sentiments entertained and avowed by the possessor of these valuable qualities.

Let us, then, for a short time consider some of these sentiments, as expressed in certain speeches delivered at Birmingham and Ipswich in the month of January of this present year. These speeches, indeed, are of a somewhat different character; and we must so guide our criticism as to avoid being included among those political opponents of Mr Chamberlain who, as he informed his constituents in his first harangue, have been attacking him "with persistent abuse and misrepresentation." Of such weapons we have no need; and our object is not so much to find fault with Mr Chamberlain for the employment of certain phrases and arguments, as to inquire and point out what is the real meaning of these phrases, and to what point it is that these arguments necessarily lead. The greater part, therefore, of the Birmingham speech may be passed over without comment. It consists, in the first place, of self-glorification on the part which the speaker had played in boldly accusing his Conservative opponents at home of having hired "roughs" to break up their own meeting by attacking Liberals whose presence thereat could have only increased its importance. That such an accusation should have been brought, sustained by the evidence of persons who disappeared as soon as that evidence was contradicted on oath, may seem rather a doubtful subject for the self-congratulation of a Cabinet Minister; but tastes vary, and Mr Chamberlain, so far as we are concerned, is welcome to the satisfaction which he seems to have derived from the incident. The greater part of the rest of his Birmingham speech is taken up with the usual laudation of all that "the Liberal party" has

been saying and doing of late,—with rejoicing over the passing of the Franchise Bill—description of the probable effects of the Redistribution Bill, and the new combinations which it will call into existence—and a *quasi* justification of that foreign and colonial policy of the present Government, upon which the general concurrence of public opinion has already pronounced a very different judgment. It is not until the end of the speech that we find Mr Chamberlain asking, "What is to be the nature of the domestic legislation of the future?" and answering his own question with words so remarkable, that one can hardly believe them to have been uttered by the colleague of a Prime Minister who boasts himself the faithful disciple of Sir Robert Peel, of a Lord Chancellor who has a high reputation as a constitutional lawyer, and a War Minister who represents one of the largest landed properties in the kingdom. It is the colleague and counsellor of these men who tells his audience that "just as there are politicians who would occupy all the world, and leave nothing for the ambition of anybody else, *so we have their counterpart at home in the men who, having already annexed everything that is worth having, expect everybody else to be content with the crumbs that fall from their own table.*" If these words stood alone, they might well serve as a text for a discourse upon the unscrupulous character of the charges which, if they have any meaning at all, they level at some class or classes of Englishmen without the shadow of justification. Who or what are the men who have "already annexed everything that is worth having"? When William of Normandy invaded England, it is undeniable that annexation to a very considerable extent followed

the invasion, and that in his, as well as in subsequent reigns, large grants of land were given by our sovereigns to followers and favourites. It would be curious, if it were possible, to ascertain how great or how small a quantity of the lands so granted has been handed down by descent to those who are its present possessors, and how much or how little has changed hands by the regular process of sale and purchase which has been going on for the last four hundred years. It would be interesting, moreover, if it were possible, to discover what was the amount of population in any way wronged or dispossessed by these ancient "annexations," what the condition of the lands annexed, and what would have become of them if they had been left alone. Assuredly, the greater part of such lands were in a wild and uncultivated state; and where this was not the case, the change which took place was, to a large extent, only the substitution of one great owner for another, the comparatively small population of that period being but little affected by the transaction. These reflections are at once suggested by Mr Chamberlain's next words, although the latter certainly throw considerable doubt upon the actual meaning of those which we have already quoted. Let us read, mark, and learn from the following sentences:—

"If you will go back to the origin of things," says Mr. Chamberlain, "you will find that *when our social arrangements first began to shape themselves, every man was born into the world with natural rights,—with a right to a share in the great inheritance of the community, with a right to a part of the land of his birth. But all these rights have passed away. The common rights of ownership have disappeared.* Some of them have been sold; some of them have been given away by people who

had no right to dispose of them; some of them have been lost by apathy and ignorance; some of them have been stolen by fraud; and some have been acquired by violence. Private ownership has taken the place of these communal rights, and this system has become so interwoven with our habits and usages, it has been so sanctioned by law and protected by custom, *that it might be very difficult, and perhaps impossible, to reverse it.*"

In the opinion expressed by Mr Chamberlain in the last sentence we are certainly inclined to agree. It would be "very difficult," if not "impossible," to reverse that private ownership of land which is the outcome of an advance in civilisation which gradually puts an end to those "communal rights" which are only compatible with a comparatively primitive state of existence. So long as men are congregated in nomad tribes, without fixed place of abode, and living only, so to speak, from hand to mouth, it is possible for "communal rights" to exist in the widest sense of the words, and for every member of the tribe to claim his share of the scanty property which it may possess. But the moment that men settle down in the permanent occupation of a country, and establish themselves as a nation, under whatever form of government they may have chosen, the acquisition of property by individuals immediately begins, and "communal rights" of necessity disappear, by a longer or shorter process, according to circumstances. It is impossible that it could be otherwise. If a man could have no security that he would be allowed to enjoy any property which his own skill or labour had acquired, the desire to acquire would be sensibly diminished, if not altogether destroyed. As to land especially, the difficulty of

maintaining "communal rights" would be insuperable, because no man would plough and sow when others had as good a right as he to reap; and therefore, under a system of "communal rights," land would not be cultivated, and the resources of the soil would remain undeveloped. Of course we are prepared to be told that we are wresting Mr Chamberlain's words from the meaning with which he employed them, and evading the real questions which he intended to raise. No such thing. We are most anxious to meet, fairly and fully, the mischievous spirit which pervades these two semi-Socialist speeches which have been delivered by Mr Gladstone's President of the Board of Trade; but it is a spirit which eludes pursuit and evades argument unless encountered by a process of exhaustion. If Mr Chamberlain did not mean by "communal rights" such a system as that to which we have alluded—a system utterly incompatible with any settled institutions—what did he mean? We will at once confess that when an orator takes us back to "the origin of things," and to the time "when our social arrangements first began to shape themselves," the discovery of his exact meaning is a task of some difficulty. We may fearlessly assert, however, of Great Britain—as well, indeed, as of every other civilised country—that there never was a period at which "every man" was born into the world with any such rights as those which Mr Chamberlain describes. This is the doctrine which Mr Henry George preaches in almost identical words, as witness his recent speech at the meeting held in January opposite the Royal Exchange, when this champion of land agitation informed the unemployed of London

that "the great principle that went to the very root of all reform was this—that *all men were created equal; with equal rights to the land in which they were born.*"

It is not to be expected that a man who, like Mr George, joins in a "prayer that all landlords might be taken into heaven," and talks of "landlords being substituted for the Lord above all" in this country, could speak upon these questions without extravagance and absurdity. His fallacies may safely be left to refute themselves. But when a Cabinet Minister utters the unmitigated rubbish which we have quoted from the speech at Birmingham, it is not only right but necessary that his folly should be exposed. Where does Mr Chamberlain learn that "every man" was born into the world "with a right to a part of the land of his birth"? Of course he must intend to convey the idea, which he apparently shares in common with his friend Mr Henry George, of an equal right, or rather of a right to an equal share; for if one man was born into the world with a right to half an acre, and another with a right to half-a-dozen acres, the whole theory would be destroyed at once.

But if men are born with such rights, why not women? Looking at the question from this point of view, the population of Great Britain at the present time has become so large that there would be some difficulty in adjusting matters upon Mr Chamberlain's and Mr George's notions, even if no other obstacles stood in the way. Unfortunately, however, these are neither few nor far between. Not a day passes without the entrance into our English world of numerous male and female infants, all, of course, with equal "rights to a part of the land

of their birth." Every day, therefore, a further division of land would become necessary. Then arises another difficulty. Who is to till the land until the infants are able to enjoy their "natural inheritance"? Again, another obstacle: land is of different character and quality; how is equality to be arrived at? We are perfectly aware that this line of argument has an appearance of absurdity about it which is little suited to that which has become one of the greatest questions of the day; but the theory of Messrs George and Chamberlain is so absurd in itself, that it can only be met in this manner. The truth is that, either from ignorance or something less excusable, these would-be instructors of our new electorate have fallen into a confusion of ideas which would be thoroughly ridiculous, if its results were not likely to be mischievous when they come to us in the shape of revolutionary speeches addressed to ill-informed audiences. Men are only too willing to believe that they have been, somehow or other, deprived of rights, and treated with injustice, and they can scarcely be blamed for listening with a ready ear to persons in high and responsible positions who address them in such a strain.

It occurs to us at once that an orator inspired with patriotic feelings at such a time as the present, would have rather sought to point out to the newly enfranchised the manner in which the different ranks of society depend one upon the other, how their interests are blended, how no one class can suffer alone, and how much freedom for all is provided under our mixed constitution. Such an orator would have striven to awaken his hearers to a sense of the new and responsible duties about to be imposed

upon them, rather than to teach them lessons of discontent, and a desire to use the franchise for selfish purposes. But where did Mr Chamberlain learn his history, or whence did he glean the information which he so glibly and yet so authoritatively places before his Birmingham constituents? Is it by direct inspiration from Divine authority that he derives this new and wonderful doctrine, that men are born each with a share in the land of his birth? As Christians we readily admit that, in one sense, men are all born "equal,"—that is to say, that equally to high and low is given the same blessed hope of eternal happiness in a future state, where the differences which exist in the present world will exist no longer. But during men's pilgrimage upon earth these differences of rank, wealth, and position do exist, and have always existed: we are distinctly told that we are to "have the poor always with" us; and Providence has no more ordained that men shall be born with "equal rights," than that they should come into the world equal as to health, size, and strength. Therefore when Messrs Chamberlain and George propound this startling doctrine, they are simply declaring that which has no real existence in fact and truth.

"Private ownership," whether of land or of anything else, is only another form of words for "the right of possessing"; and that right of individuals to possess is an absolute necessity to a civilised community, and could not be "reversed," as Mr Chamberlain appears to wish, without the greatest detriment to the general interest. The mistake which is made by these advocates of a relapse into primitive barbarism, is in pitting "private ownership" against "common rights," as if the two things

were naturally opposed, instead of being, as they are, perfectly compatible when fairly and accurately defined. "Private ownership" of property, whilst it encourages individuals to acquire that which is advantageous to themselves and their families, entails upon them that adequate contribution towards public objects which Mr Chamberlain improperly calls "a ransom for the security which property enjoys," and which, in his speech at Ipswich, he somewhat more justly called "the insurance which wealth may find it to its advantage to provide against the risks to which it is undoubtedly subject." Neither definition, however, expresses with entire accuracy the real nature of the payments which are entailed upon individuals, and applied to the advantage of the community by and through the existence of "private ownership." These payments, levied under different forms of taxation, are made by individuals in support of the laws and settled institutions which have enabled them without disturbance to employ their skill, labour and capital in the acquisition of property in one form or another, and towards the maintenance of the framework of the constitution under which they happen to live. It is by taxing these results of individual efforts and individual enterprise that the State—or general community—obtains a revenue which could never have been obtainable if those efforts had been restrained and that enterprise stayed by any such veto upon "private ownership" as that which appears so desirable in the eyes of our semi-Socialist Cabinet Minister and his ally. Therefore it is as clear as daylight (save to those who do not wish to see) that "private ownership" adding, as it does, to the aggregate wealth and

available resources of the State, is very far from being the evil which these democratic orators would teach us to believe. Meanwhile, it is the "commonright" of every member of the community in which private ownership exists, to profit by the results which are obtained by the taxation of property for the general good; nor is such common right in the least degree opposed to the existence of that private property by which, indeed, it is assisted and secured.

There is one point, however, which we must not omit to mention before we go further in our criticisms of those wild and extraordinary "extra-parliamentary utterances." Mr Chamberlain's diatribes are all directed against "private ownership" in land. But if "private ownership" *per se* be a bad thing, why stop at land? Upon what principle can you deny to "every man who is born into the world" a fair share in the mills, the shops, the mines, the houses, and in every other property which happens to exist in the "land of his birth"? The Socialist may reply that there is a difference between land and property which the skill and labour of man has created; and may fly off into eloquent declamation to the effect that land is to man as much a necessity as the air he breathes—that God gave both, and human laws have no right to refuse either to "the people." This is the kind of argument with which these gentlemen commonly reply to any such awkward question as the above. It is an argument, however, which will not hold water for a moment. In the first place, the far larger proportion of the land of this country has been so treated, so cultivated, and made the subject and recipient of so much expenditure in the pro-

cess of cultivation, that it has been practically, so far as its present condition and value are concerned, as much created by the skill and labour of man as any manufactured property which can be named. In the second place, land is not only by no means a necessity to man in the same sense as the air, which is essential to his existence ; but there is this broad and marked difference between them, that whilst the one is inexhaustible, the other is limited in quantity. Moreover, whilst the one is intangible and invisible, the other is not only visible and tangible, but taxable into the bargain ; and if it is desired by Mr Chamberlain and his Socialist friends to put air and land upon the same footing, their first logical step should be to take all taxation whatever from off the land as a preliminary step. This, probably, is a step which has hardly suggested itself to the minds of these eminent politicians, yet it is one without which their parallel cannot for a moment hold good. If, indeed, this view should be adopted by the nation, it is difficult to see to what it would lead. Whether the "private ownership" of land be or be not desirable in the public interest, it is beyond all question the fact that the vast majority of private owners at the present time, or their fathers before them, have acquired their land by fair purchase, under the laws of their country—have, in many instances paid largely for it—and could not be dispossessed without repayment from the coffers of the State. To take the land for the purpose of redivision, without fair and adequate compensation to those whom the State had permitted to acquire it, would be as flagrant a robbery as to appropriate the three per-cents., to refuse to pay interest on the National Debt, or to violate national

faith by any other similar proceeding.

This, however, is not the path which we are at this moment invited to tread. If we read attentively Mr Chamberlain's Ipswich speech, delivered a few days subsequently to the Birmingham oration, we shall find that these general platitudes about the "natural rights" of men, and "the right of every man to a part of the land of his birth," are little more than the smoke under cover of which the real and more immediate objects of the speaker may be approached with greater safety. "Ask for a great deal, that you may get a little," is a favourite motto with encroaching politicians ; and sufficient bluster about "natural rights" and the like may create a feeling of distrust and alarm in people's minds which will be followed by such a natural reaction as may induce a more favourable reception of Mr Chamberlain's real meaning and desires, when they are proclaimed to the world in a tangible and practical shape. At Ipswich, indeed, we must do the speaker the justice to say that he withdrew nothing that he had advanced at Birmingham. He stated boldly, indeed in other words, the text from which he had previously preached.

"I am certain that our Liberalism has no chance at all unless it will recognise the rights of the poor—their right to live, and their right to a fair chance of enjoying life. In the earlier stages of society these rights were fully recognised. Land used to be held in common. Every man who was born into a community had his apportioned share in the great natural inheritance of the race, and if he was willing to work, his livelihood was assured. Now all that has changed ; the birthright of the English people has been bartered away for a mess of pottage, and it has become the possession of private owners of property."

We hardly remember to have ever read a statement made by a responsible Minister of the Crown so mischievous in spirit, so suggestive of inferences which are absolutely untrue, and so reckless in its misrepresentation of history and facts. Mr Chamberlain may seek for "Liberalism" what support he pleases, but it is a shameless perversion of truth to insinuate that either "Liberalism" or "Conservatism" has failed to recognise "the right of the poor to live, and their right to a fair chance of enjoying life." This is not a fair attempt to obtain political support for a party, but an obvious insinuation that the newly enfranchised class have hitherto been wronged and oppressed by the classes above them—an insinuation having a direct tendency to provoke and justify a war of classes. The insinuation is as unworthy as it is baseless. There has been no such want of recognition either among politicians of any party or among the owners of private property, against whom the President of the Board of Trade has started his crusade. To use his own phrase, "every man who is born into the world" has the right to live; and we freely concede that he has something more—namely, the right to the protection of the laws, and the enjoyment of all the advantages of the constitution of the country in which he happens to be born. It is something more that the Socialist demands—namely, a "natural right," which would set at nought those laws and violate that constitution; and this is a right which cannot be allowed without the destruction of that order and civilisation which are essential to the prosperity, nay, to the very existence, of the nation.

But what does Mr Chamberlain mean by his next word? Does

he mean to say that "in the earlier stages of society"—i. e., in semi-barbarous times—the poor had any rights which are not now as fully recognised as then? Of course, with a much smaller population, the evils of overcrowding had not arisen, and the woes and misfortunes of the poor were of a different character. Does Mr Chamberlain really pine after those days, and believe that "land being held in common" implies a better and happier life than is now possible for the poor? We venture to say that these vague, general statements as to supposed halcyon days are founded upon no historical knowledge, and that it would puzzle the orator to define the particular epoch to which he refers, or any epoch at all in which the advantages which he depicts as having been within the reach of the poor were not grievously counterbalanced by considerations which he shuts out of sight and altogether ignores.

But the last sentence which we have quoted is that in which audacity of misrepresentation culminates to its highest point. What does any man mean by telling his countrymen that their "birthright has been bartered away for a mess of pottage, and has become the possession of private owners of property"? This is a deliberate and wholly unjustifiable charge against the owners of property of having robbed the public. The process which Mr Chamberlain describes as one by which "the birthright" of the English people has been bartered, is, in plain English, nothing more nor less than the progress of civilisation, which has gradually converted vast tracts of land from the barren and unprofitable condition in which they would otherwise have been left if "held in common," has developed the resources

of the country to an enormous extent, and vastly increased her material wealth and the prosperity of her inhabitants. The "birthright" of Englishmen would have been barren indeed but for that "mess of pottage" which private owners have given during a long series of years in the shape of their capital applied to the cultivation of the soil, and which represents that expansion of the power and wealth of Great Britain against which Mr Chamberlain is in fact protesting when he desires to return to that old, undeveloped, primitive condition of things which, if advocated by an old-fashioned Tory, he would be the first to deride, but which is the only state of things under which land can be "held in common" to any appreciable extent, or the "rights" of those whom he calls "the poor" can exist without being the "wrong" of the whole nation.

After having indulged in the farrago of nonsense—but mischievous nonsense—to which we have referred, Mr Chamberlain wisely told his Ipswich audiences that he would "try not to lay down any absolute platform" for the Liberal party, but would endeavor to indicate what they should do, especially in the way of "social legislation." As time and space forbid us to discuss several interesting suggestions under this fruitful head, we must content ourselves with a reference to those which concern the special object of our present criticism. Having done something to set the labouring classes against the "private owners" of land, Mr Chamberlain could not of course be satisfied without an attempt to set farmers against their landlords. The farmers are told that "the three F's" are almost within their reach, and that

adviser (not being himself a land-owner) does not "regard with alarm." But, according to his view, "the main obstacle seems to be in the farmers themselves. It is, in the first place, *in the way in which they play into the hands of their landlords*, and give them their support in propositions which would not be of the slightest advantage to the farmers themselves; and in the second place, it is owing to the condition of existing tenancies. Most of our English farmers hold rather large farms. They have not sufficient capital," &c. &c. And then, telling his audience that "we import every year from £25,000,000 to £30,000,000 of produce, in the shape of butter, eggs, cheese, poultry, fruit, and vegetables, *which ought to be grown in this country*, Mr Chamberlain declares that "this kind of cultivation will *only prosper when it is in the hands of small cultivators*;"—"and so we come back to what, after all, is the most urgent and pressing need of all,—that we shall, as far as may be, go back to the old-time freeholds in the land, and to re-establish the peasant and yeoman."

We pause with astonishment as we read these words. Can these be the sentiments of the Radical Free-trader Mr Chamberlain? They carry us back at once to the Corn-law debates of 1846, wherein we shall find it again and again urged by the Protectionist speakers that the removal of "protection to British industry" would, as one inevitable result, diminish the number of "peasants," and drive from amongst us this very class of small landed proprietors which we are now told it is so essential to restore! What was the real meaning of that great struggle between Protection and Free-trade? It meant that the producers in England had, in process of time, be-

h their new

come outnumbered by the consumers, and that, in the supposed interest of the latter, cheapness must be the one thing aimed at in our future legislation. But it meant at the same time, and as a certain consequence of this new policy, that the poorer and smaller producer must be gradually crushed out of existence, and that, as far as the production of food was concerned, labour must be economised by the employment of machinery; the expense of buildings must be reduced by the merging of small into large farms; hedges must be grubbed, modern improvements everywhere introduced, and additional skill and capital imported into the cultivation of the land. All this tended, of course, to the same result. The number of small owners and of small farmers decreased and if Mr Chamberlain could ascertain the present condition of the whole class of freeholders owning less than one hundred acres of land, he would probably find that a very large proportion of them have mortgaged their property to the extent of at least two-thirds of its value—that they are paying interest higher than the amount of an ordinary rent, and are in most cases worse off than a day-labourer in regular employment. Perhaps, however, Mr Chamberlain would tell us that he is referring to a smaller class still—that by “peasants and yeomen” he intends to signify persons with one, two, or three acres of land. Be it so. Does any one who possesses practical knowledge upon the subject suppose for a moment that, except in the case of garden ground in the immediate vicinity of town, a man can at the present time support himself upon such a quantity of land? There is but one answer to the question. The day of such small

proprietors in England is past and gone. Do not let us be mistaken upon this point. Reference has recently been made to the small holding encouraged and created by Lord Tollemache upon his estate. There is one feature, however, in this case, which renders it entirely different from anything suggested by Mr Chamberlain. It is stated that each of these small holders is expected to have some trade or occupation—that is, something to rely upon beyond that which he can make out of the produce of his land. Now, as each village can only support a limited number of tradesmen of every description, it is evident that the limit must soon be reached at which such holdings can be available for the inhabitants. We would, however, go as far as to say that small holdings may be beneficial even under a wider application of the principle. It is desirable that every labourer should have a fair-sized garden to his cottage, which undoubtedly adds both to his comfort and his content. It is also extremely useful, where practicable, that holdings should exist of a sufficient size to enable the holder to keep a cow, and to grow vegetables and roots, although he may not be possessed of capital sufficient to farm upon a large scale. This, however, can seldom be arranged unless in close proximity to a town or village, wherein the occupier of such a holding resides. The moment it is attempted, under the existing circumstances of farming, to carry out such a project to a large extent, the necessity of erecting dwellings and the necessary buildings even for a very small holding, will require so much capital as to render it impossible that the experiment should be fairly remunerative. It may be safely assumed that where small holdings can be

made to pay, they will continue to exist; but to return to the primitive times and the primitive system which Mr Chamberlain so much regrets, is not only an impossibility, but, under the present conditions of life, would create a positive injury to the class in whose interests he affects to make the suggestion.

We cannot stop to inquire into the manner in which Mr Chamberlain proposes to obtain the land necessary for the restoration of the class to which he looks with such favour, but we rejoice to see that, in a recent letter as to some criticisms upon his Ipswich speech made by Mr Foljambe, M. P., he declares that his proposals "are based on a fair value being paid for any land which it may be expedient for the State or the community to acquire; and in the speech itself he makes the remark with reference to what he calls the "absorption" of common land or of any other public rights, that "*robbery is robbery, whether it is practised against the individual or against the State,*"—an observation which it would have been well if the speaker and his colleagues had borne in mind in their recent Irish land agitation, and which, at least, will be impressed upon their memory more strongly in the future.

With regard to the question of commons, indeed, Mr Chamberlain falls into the usual error of Radical orators, and talks of "rights" having been taken from the public, in a manner which shows gross ignorance of the question. In the case of very many enclosures, the act has been performed mainly, if not solely, for the purpose of bringing uncultivated and waste land under tillage, thus increasing the food-producing power of the country strictly in and for the

public interest. In almost every instance, the common has belonged not to the general public, but to the lord of the manor and a certain defined and separate portion of the public, called "the commoners," whose rights have been fully and fairly considered in the act of enclosure. The general public have doubtless had a "right of way" in many cases, which has always been carefully secured to them; but to have given to them anything more would have been a distinct act of confiscation of the rights of the commoners, whether many or few in number.

If it be desirable that the State should purchase land "at a fair value" for the purpose of establishing a number of "old-time freeholds," it may be pointed out that there never was a time when so much land was in the market which its proprietors would gladly sell. But is this what is conveyed—or what is intended to be conveyed—to the agricultural labourers and others of the new electorate to whom these speeches are addressed, and to whom the acquisition of land is held out as a tangible benefit to be placed within their reach if they use their votes as the speaker desires? Not at all. It would be no attraction to Sussex labourers in full pay to be transplanted into Essex. Something nearer home would be required, and therefore land must be forcibly taken, at whatever the State may please to consider "a fair value," from those who may by no means desire to sell it. But if land, why not other things? If it is robbery on my part to have a couple of thousand acres of land (for which I or my forefathers probably paid a high price), whilst my neighbors Hodge and his comrades have none, why is it not also robbery for Mr A. or

Mr B. to have railway stock, house or funded property, of the same value?

Moreover, if this State purchase and distribution of land is to begin, what particular portion of the working classes is to have the first claim to receive a portion of the prize? Plausible as the theory may be made to appear in the mouth of the mob-orator and communistic Minister, its practical working would be found to be surrounded with difficulties. If proof of this were desired, it is to be found in the condition of many landed proprietors at the present moment. Their owners would be only too glad to let large portions of them to small holders, or even to sell to small owners. But the class is not to be found. Let any man look around his own dwelling and ask himself, in the first place, where he could obtain men able and willing to become the owners at a fair price of small lots of land; and in the second place, what hope such men could have of supporting themselves and their families upon the produce of such land? If the land is to be purchased for the new class by the State, the question of the terms upon which it is to be held would give rise to a fresh crop of difficulties; and if we could create a large class of small freeholders tomorrow, within a week the operation of natural laws would have begun to create inequalities; ere long the property of one man would have increased, that of others would have dwindled away and disappeared, and the demon of private ownership would again appear in this visionary paradise.

We are well aware that to well-informed and thinking men, the appeal which Mr Chamberlain makes to "natural rights" will be well known to be (in the lan-

guage of the 'Times,' in its comments upon his Ipswich speech) "*the most completely exploded of political quackeries.*" Under ordinary circumstances we should have no fear that such foolish and mischievous doctrines would have produced the smallest effect upon the public mind. But we must recollect the position of the speaker, and the circumstances under which the speeches have been delivered.

The latter have been avowedly addressed to the body of newly enfranchised electors, with a view to guide them in the first exercise of their electoral power. The former, is a man whom the present Prime Minister has elevated to a platform from whence his words are widely heard, and must have considerable weight. For they are the words of one of those whom Mr Gladstone has placed among the counsellors of his Sovereign, and whose sentiments, if not wholly in accordance with those of the rest of the Cabinet, must, so long as his colleagues remain mute after his repeated declarations, be held to approximate to their views sufficiently to allow them to conduct with joint responsibility the affairs of the nation. Does Mr Gladstone hold these sentiments; and if so, does he still plume himself upon being a follower of the late Sir Robert Peel? Hear the words of that great statesman upon the second reading of his Corn Law Bill in 1846: "I am not one of those who wish to see the constitution of this country more democratic than it is. I cannot think that the public mind wishes it to be more democratic than it is. I have no faith in Governments guided by uncontrolled popular passions. I have no wish to see the aristocratic element weakened in our constitution." Then turn to the speeches of Mr Gladstone's col-

league, and see him rejoicing that "democracy has established itself in the seat of authority," and that "this democratic movement will be accentuated by the proposal of the Seats Bill."

Sir Robert Peel was at least a constitutional statesman, and to such a title the present Prime Minister has forfeited all claim. What is the secret of Mr Chamberlain's presence in the Cabinet, and the authority thereby given to his revolutionary harangues? It is easily told. Three things mainly contributed to the Liberal victory of 1880. One, perhaps not so widely known as its importance deserves, was the action of the great body of Wesleyan Methodists, who, for the first time in the electioneering history of the last fifty years, threw their whole weight into the scales of the Liberal party. A greater thing, possibly, was the untiring zeal and energy with which Mr Gladstone himself preached an anti-Beaconsfield policy, and persuaded the country that he was the apostle of peace and economy, protesting against war and extravagance. The greatest of all was the confidence which Lord Hartington had inspired in the large body of moderate men, Liberals and non-politicians, who, giving credence to Mr Gladstone's repeated assertions that he had no intention of returning to office, rallied round that which they believed to be the flag of steady and progressive Liberalism. But as soon as the Radical portion of the press and the personal adherents of Mr Gladstone had persuaded themselves and him that he was the only possible Prime Minister for the Liberal party, it became evident that those who had forced their candidate into the Premiership must be conciliated and kept

in good humour. To be sure, there seemed something incongruous in placing among the confidential advisers of a monarch, those who had avowed republican opinions; and in bringing those who have spoken with scant respect of the Royal Family into close proximity to the Sovereign. These, however, are of course old-fashioned ideas, and could not for a moment be allowed to stand in the way of that paramount object—the securing of place and power to the Liberal party. To obtain this essential object, every scruple must be cast aside. Radicals, atheists, republicans, all have votes, and all are orthodox members of the party which falsely arrogates to itself the title of "Liberal." In order to conciliate the support of such people, Mr Gladstone formed his Government upon so broad a basis as to admit the holders of opinions such as those we criticise to-day.

Mr Gladstone is sometimes spoken of by his friends as the incarnation of all that is moderate—the one man who is able to temper and restrain the impetuous spirits of his party. Alas! there is another and truer reading of his character and position. The belief in his "moderation"—the idea that the "disciple of Sir Robert Peel" cannot be really an enemy to our monarchical institutions—this, and the homage paid to his undoubted talent, have enabled Mr Gladstone to keep, in his Cabinet and among his followers, men who, but for him, would have been fighting boldly to-day against the pernicious doctrines of a George and a Chamberlain. It is a common whisper among Liberals—"When Gladstone goes, there must be great changes." Yes—but in what direction? The name and authority of the Premier may, it is true, have somewhat restrained

the impetuosity of Radicalism, but they have at the same time led those who could and would effectually have opposed it to a point at which their opposition will be too late. These men—many of whom have condemned in their hearts and disapproved in their private conversations the measures which they have reluctantly supported by their votes—these men have much to answer for to their country. They may, however, be regarded with pity; for whilst they are gradually losing, if they have not already lost, the confidence of those who trusted them to resist extreme and violent measures, they are laughed to scorn by their Radical colleagues, and will be cast aside as soon as it suits the purpose of the latter to do so.

What are these speeches of Mr Chamberlain's but a bid for the leadership of that Radical faction which will soon absorb the so-called Liberal party? They are something more indeed. They are, if not intended, at least eminently calculated, to excite a war of classes,—the poor against the rich,—and to bring upon this country all the misery and ruin which a similar war brought upon France at the close of the last century. As if he had not been sufficiently explicit in his previous speeches, what does Mr Chamberlain say upon the 29th January, again addressing his Birmingham constituents? Imputing to Sir Stafford Northcote a desire (which we need hardly say had never been expressed by him) to prevent the labourers and artisans from improving their condition, Mr Chamberlain sneeringly continues: "The working classes in this country are to continue in the future as they have in the past—to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters, and to do their duty

in the state of life to which it shall please God to call them. I think that is a rich man's gospel, and a barren programme." What is the meaning of these words? Evidently from their context, not that the "working classes" are to do their duty as God-fearing citizens, and strive, as every good Conservative would have them strive, to better their position under the fair conditions which our free constitution affords, and by the practice of such thrift and providence as have hitherto raised many of their class in the social scale. No; it is something else which Mr Chamberlain dangles before their eyes: something to be obtained by means of the vote which has just been given them; something to be wrested from other classes against whom they are excited by the whole tone and tenor of those inflammatory speeches. And for all that may follow as the result of this teaching, the whole of the present Government, and beyond all men Mr Gladstone himself, must be held directly responsible to the country. These are not matters which should be left "open questions" in any Cabinet. Mr Chamberlain has boldly and loudly declared himself the advocate of free, that is State paid, education for the working classes, of paid members of Parliament, the remission of all indirect taxation, a system of graduated taxation, and the forcible taking of land from those who are legally entitled to it, for the purpose of dealing with it upon communistic principles. In order to justify the latter proposal, he roundly accuses "some people" (a sufficiently wide term) of confiscation, plunder, and robbery; and endeavours to show the poor that they are poor, not because it is the ordering of Providence that there should be inequalities of rank

and wealth in the world, and because natural causes necessitate poverty in countries with an ever-increasing population, but because they are oppressed and robbed by the classes above them, or rather by the laws and institutions of their country, which protect the latter in the possession of their property.

The country has a right to call upon Mr Gladstone and his Cabinet either to let us know that these are their accepted doctrines, or boldly to disavow them. The matter is too serious, the crisis too grave, for dallying with principles which have wrought ruin to other nations, and which cannot be innocuous if permitted to prevail in Great Britain. Even though the result might be such a terrible disaster as the interruption of the concord and the imperilling of the unity of the Liberal party, there is a plain duty before those of Mr Gladstone's Government who are loyal to the Crown and Constitution of their country, and heavy indeed will be their responsibility if that duty be forgotten or evaded. The recent accession to the Cabinet of Mr Shaw-Lefevre (who in one of his last public speeches has boldly condemned the wild doctrines preached by Mr Chamberlain) and of Lord Rosebery (who is himself guilty to a large extent of the crime of "private-ownership" in land) may, by persons of a sanguine temperament, be hailed

as a sign of the Prime Minister's disapproval of the extravagant utterances of his President of the Board of Trade. On the other hand, the presence of these men, and of others who are supposed to hold moderate views, in the same Cabinet with Mr Chamberlain, goes to show that his opinions are not considered by the Government to be as subversive of the British Constitution as they undoubtedly are, and in fact gives greater weight to his speeches. The country will not believe that the "Constitutional Liberals" in Mr Gladstone's Cabinet are sincere or trustworthy unless they now speak out. Let them at once repudiate the Communistic doctrines of their colleague; let them have the courage to show the world that the plunder of private owners is not the policy of the Liberal party, and the "natural rights" of man no part of its accepted creed: or if they have not the honesty and wisdom to take such a course, let them at least banish from their minds the delusion that they can be associated with the teachers of these pernicious theories without weakening their own influence for good, and practically lending the support of their character and position to doctrines which in their souls they abhor, and to men whom in their consciences they believe to be the worst enemies of the Crown and Constitution of Great Britain.

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FORTUNE'S WHEEL.—PART I.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown,
With that wild wheel we go not up or down ;

For man is man, and master of his fate."

—*Shelley*.

CHAPTER I.—A HIGHLAND HOME-COMING.

FIRST-CLASS travellers are rare in the month of June on the western and wilder section of the Great West of Scotland Railway. The season of tourists is not yet ; and sportsmen seldom begin to straggle northwards before the second week of August. Through three-fourths of the year the Company must rely for dividends or debenture interest on its goods traffic—carrying cattle and sheep, herring barrels, and wire-fencing, with miscellaneous trifles of the kind. As for Auchnadarroch station, which is situated at the head of Strathoran, the station-master, metaphorically as well as physically, is one of the biggest men in the north country. Dressed in a deal of brief authority, he has the satisfaction of patronising the country-folks who travel by the trains ; he is toadied in the summer by innocent Cockneys, helplessly eager for direction

and advice ; and he may simultaneously indulge his indolence and fussiness by managing to make an infinite ado about nothing. Save a lonely shooting-lodge or two, a couple of mansees, and the residence of Glenconan, there is nothing in the shape of a gentleman's house within a radius of some score of miles ; and although the "Mac-Tavish Arms and Posting Establishment" stands within a short gunshot of the station, in those opening days of June it has barely taken down its shutters.

So it was all the stranger that, one bright afternoon in June, the station should be the scene of unwonted excitement. The platform, usually left to be cleansed by the rains and winds, was swept and garnished ; the porter had taken his hands out of the pockets of his corduroys ; the station-master was standing at attention, and in close

conversation with an elderly Highlander in homespuns; while the smoke of the train was visible in the middle-distance, as it came sobbing and puffing up the stiff incline. The cause of the excitement might be explained by a carriage that had pulled up on the shingle sweep before the pine-built porch of the little booking-office. It was a waggnette of teak, with a pair of smart chestnut cobs—one and the other strong, low, and serviceable; while the well-set-up driver had a certain style about him that savoured rather of the Parks and Piccadilly than of Ross-shire.

"And as I was saying to you, Mr Ferguson," drawled the Highlander in homespun, "this will be a great day for Glenconan."

"I do not doubt it, Mr Ross—I do not doubt it," replied the other, motioning away with an affable wave of the arm the tender of the Highlander's snuff-mull. He was excited, and could not help showing it, though he prided himself on the serenity of his deportment. "We do what we can; but man's powers are limited, and we must have resident proprietors if we are to develop the local traffic."

Donald Ross rumped up his shaggy eyebrows. He was a fine specimen of the elderly hillman—as tall as the station-master, and far more muscular. Hard-looking and weather-beaten, he seemed to have worked away, in a long life among the hills, all superabundant flesh from his bone and sinew. Though his Saxon was serviceable, like the cobs, he was not strong in it; he failed to catch the meaning of the station-master, and he struck back into his own line of thought.

"Ay, more [resident gentlemen, as you were saying, will be a great thing; and it will be a great thing for Glenconan when we have one of the 'Glenconans' among us

again. I'm thinking he will be turning Corryvreckan and Glengoy into deer; and 'deed these shepherd-men are just one of the plagues of Egypt that the minister would be speaking about the former Sabbath-day."

Meanwhile the train was approaching, and at last it drew up at the platform. Three gentlemen got out of a first-class carriage. The station-master received them cap in hand, with an obsequiousness significant of the solemnity of the occasion. As for Donald, he slightly lifted his deer-stalker bonnet, and pulled shyly at a grizzled forelock; but his grey eyes gleamed with such a soft satisfaction as you may see in a friendly collie gratified by the home-coming of his master.

The foremost of the three, who naturally took the lead, was a hale veteran of about sixty or somewhat more, cast very much in the manly mould of the keeper. His dress was almost as rough, though carefully put on; but there was no possibility of mistaking him for anything but a gentleman: and if his face was beaming with excitement and good-humour, he was nevertheless the sort of man you would have been sorry to quarrel with. There was energy of purpose in the features, that were high and even harsh, as in the flash of the keen grey eyes; with a touch of sarcastic resolution about the corners of the firm mouth. His companions, who kept themselves modestly in the background, were boys in comparison. One of them might have come of age a year or two before; the other was some half-dozen years his senior.

The elderly gentleman acknowledged the salutation of the station-master with a nod, and a quick look that seemed to read the man through and dispose of him. But his greeting to Donald was cor-

diality itself as he held out the muscular hand, which the other evidently had expected.

"And so you're here, are you, Mr Ross, instead of upon Funa-chan; and this is the way you've been looking after the deer in my absence."

Donald grinned a width of welcome like the breaking of a blaze of sunshine after a thunderstorm over the waters of the neighbouring Lochconan.

"And 'deed it was very little of the deer that I was thinking of to-day, Glenconan,—though I might possibly have been speaking of them to the station-master here," he added, conscientiously. "And it's a pity but there was your piper to give you your welcome; but Peter has been palsied since the Martinmas before last—and short in the wind, moreover. And how have you been keeping, sir; and how was Miss Grace?"

"Exceedingly well, and all the better for the thought of coming home. I can answer for myself, and I can answer for her too. As for Miss Grace, you will see her here in a few days, and then she can speak for herself, which she is very well able to do. And now, Donald, lend a hand with the luggage, will you? I long to be off, and up the glen."

As for the luggage, it was light enough. The heavy baggage had been forwarded a few days before. In the twinkling of an eye the waggonette was packed; the porter, exulting over a generous tip, was looking forward to a pleasant evening in the bar of the "Mac-Tavish Arms"; and Donald sat perched beside the stylish coachman, watching the start of the impatient cobs.

There are few finer drives in the picturesque Western Highlands than that down the broad strath

of the Bran and up the romantic valley of the tributary Conan. The comparatively open character of the pastoral scenery in the former valley is a fitting approach to the more gloomy grandeur of the other. Dipping into Strathoran, after some of the more savage landscapes through which you have passed in the train, you might pronounce the country almost tame. The river meanders among gently sloping green hills, strewn here and there with stones, and crested with heather. From the level of the carriage-road you seldom catch a glimpse of the towering summits of any of the noble giants in the background; but at the "meeting of the waters," when the Conan joins the Bran, the scenery changes its character altogether. Entering the side-gorge, where the shadows gather even at noon, we leave softness and light for sternness and desolation. The swift black rush of the Conan, which has been pent for a space between beetling cliffs, pitches itself in the exuberance of sudden release over a brawling and foaming waterfall. The eddies of the deep dark pool below confound themselves with the reflected blackness of interlacing fir-boughs. As for the road, it has been roughly yet shrewdly engineered along the sloping ledges of the cliffs that hang between the hills and the river. It is a safe enough ascent, for the gradients are broad though steep, but a dangerous place to drive down under any circumstances; for it is only fenced on the river-side by an occasional upright stone in the Alpine fashion, and its gravel is apt to be washed and mined by the side-rills flowing across it from a succession of trickling cascades.

The elder of the two young men had never visited the glen before. In silent admiration, with a rapt

look in his soft hazel eyes, he hung over the side of the waggonette as it swayed slightly towards the Conan, and gazed down into the depths of the abyss. The elderly gentleman, who sat by him on the front seat, drew long breaths of profound satisfaction; and yet the very next moment you would have said that his face had slightly clouded. At least so it seemed to strike the youngest of the three, whose quick eyes, that caught everything above and below, were suddenly attracted by the other, and watched him curiously. Not for long, however. If he thought his host had an abiding care, that must only have been a foolish fancy; and what, indeed, could be more improbable?

David Moray, the lord of those barren grandeurs of Glenconan, was at last realising the cherished dream of his life. He was returning a rich man to the paternal property, which he had only visited at rare intervals since he inherited it; and to the shootings, which had been leased till last year to a Southern banker. Now he might hope to end his days there in peace, if the dregs of life would only run kindly. He was a sportsman born: he had come back to a paradise of sport; and though his life had been passed in tropical climates, he was as hale and sound of constitution as any man of his years could hope to be.

He could be a boy still, in the light exuberance of his spirits; and nothing keeps a man so fresh as perennial boyhood. If he had been coming home to Glenconan, as he used to come, for the holidays, he could hardly have thrown himself more heartily into the happy excitement of the hour. As the road extricated itself from the bosky entanglements of shaggy gorges, and swept down into a smiling

stretch of mountain-meadows, he stood up in the carriage, though sorely puzzled to keep his feet; for the waggonette, as it dashed downwards with locked wheels, was rocking about like a boat among the lake billows in a fresh northeaster. But it was not for nothing that Moray had so often taken the Overland route, to say nothing of weathering the Cape. And now that he was fairly and finally homeward-bound, in the "kent face" of each peak and ridge he saw the features of some familiar friend of his childhood.

"Fine weather to-morrow, Donald, though of course that old glass of yours is at 'stormy' as usual; for there is the cloud-belt on the sides of Funachan: had the hill been wearing his night-cap, it would have been another matter altogether. I say, Jack, do you see that purple patch on the shoulder—there, away to the right of the gap, and just over the birch-stump?—you should have been with me the last evening I shot there with my tenant, when we found the coveys lying like stones, though they had been wild as hawks elsewhere all through the day. Please the Fates, we'll have bloodshed there in August. And when you go out for sketches, what do you think of that for a subject?—the pool, I mean, with the grey rock, like a chapel-gable rising out of the water. And if Leslie is looking for a spot where he may indulge himself in dreaming and poetry, that bank of bracken under the birches there ought to suit him down to the ground—if we dare to talk of ground, indeed, in connection with any scene so ethereal."

In the further miles of unmeasured Highland road that led on to the old house of Glenconan, the face and spirits of its lord and

master seemed to answer to the changes of the weather and the scenery. It was a fine day—a very fine day; but there were a few fleecy and drifting clouds flitting occasionally across the heavens, and now and again some jutting angle of rock would cast a streak of blackness across the brightness of the road. So Moray's face would from time to time be shadowed by some darker or sadder thought, which seemed barely to touch it in passing. But when the waggonette pulled up before the door of the mansion, he was the kindly Highland host, overflowing with hospitality and natural pride in an ancestral seat, standing on a site which had been the home of his family for generations.

The house of Glenconan was plain and unpretending enough, and yet its surroundings gave it infinite charm. The feudal, or rather the patriarchal keep, had been blown up in the '45 with certain spare powder-casks that were embarrassing the march of the "red-soldiers," although its foundations were still to be seen on an adjacent knoll, overgrown with the ground-ivy struggling through the thick beds of bracken. As for the modern mansion, as we said, it was neither imposing nor very commodious; although it ran to a considerable number of small bedrooms and garrets, which seemed to have been elbowed aside by the rambling passages. It was built in the modern medieval Scottish fashion, with a couple of receding wings, connected with the main body or *corps de logis* by semicircular corridors. It was whitewashed, or "harled," as they say in the North; and its staring and sadly expressionless face was toned down by neither creepers nor climbers. But then the situation was simply enchanting. It stood on a gentle

slope, facing towards the sunny quarter of the south-west. Before it, lawns of the richest and softest green, watered by the rain-storms and the perpetual flying showers, ran down to Lochconan. And the lake lay sparkling like a gem in its mountain-setting, changing colours with the changing hues of the sky, from sapphire to emerald, and from emerald to black onyx. Around three-fourths of its broken circumference the little loch was girdled by swelling knolls—winding bays receded till they were lost to sight among oaks, and pines, and the copses of weeping birches. On the opposite shore was a wall of sheer precipice, where a pair of peregrine falcons had nested from time immemorial, in an accessible rift far above among the rocks. When letting the shootings, there had always been an understanding that these old friends of the family were to be sacred from the gun. But the great feature of Lochconan was its heronry, on the haunted isle of St Gilzean. The sainted missionary, who was said to have dipped hundreds of pagan Celts in the waters of his blessed spring, had subsequently received the crown of martyrdom at the hands of his ungrateful proselytes. Since then he had been in the habit of "walking" to a surprising extent—considering that his life during his latter years had been sedentary. Not a man in Glenconan or the adjoining parishes would have set foot upon the island for all the world after dusk. It may be that the silvery forms of the birds, floating ghost-like in the gloaming through the stems of the larches, had something to do with the perpetuation of the legend. And a pretty kind of poetry they added to the loch, in the presence of their silent, shadowy shapes, standing motionless but wide-awake in the

shallows through the day, on the look-out for unwary trout or minnows.

Behind the house and the kennels the ground rose rapidly. The steep home-paddocks, where the shaggy shooting-ponies ran loose, were skirted by shrubberies of evergreens, backed up by thickets of pine; and as the heather shot up through the rough herbage, so the green of the enclosures and the lower hills was studded with rich masses of purple. Roughly traced paths, softly carpeted here and there by the thick fall of the fir-needles, wound through the columns of the firs, or lost themselves among the birch clumps and the alder thickets. Thence they emerged on the barer steepes above, where they zigzagged upwards from side to side across the rocky beds of a couple of mountain brooks—streamlets or torrents, according to the weather. And each of the light rustic bridges—each tiny bit of jutting cliff projecting through the trailing and gnarled fir-roots—seemed to open some new and enchanting point of view up to the cloudland that capped the confusion of mountains.

But more than enough of description for the time, though, if I have bored my readers, the memories of Glenconan are my best excuse. Strolling about before dinner, Moray did the honours of the place to his young friends; and if eloquent admiration be the sincerest flattery, he had no reason to be dissatisfied. Though the Highland air had sharpened their appetites, he had to remind them, more than once, that it was high time to dress. Leslie, who was naturally rather taciturn, said little; but he lingered as if loath to tear himself away from the scenes where each changing impression seemed invariably a change for the better.

As for Jack Venables, he jumped about like a young chamois, in the sheer exuberance of his animal spirits, at the risk of a broken neck, or, at all events, of a sprained ankle. And his gay exhilaration gratified the older man far more than the self-contained appreciation of the other. Moray had a fellow-feeling for the headlong nature which would be doing or even suffering rather than be still.

It was to Venables that he turned more naturally during the dinner, if he showed himself more ceremoniously hospitable to Leslie. But after all, they got on very well together; and when the cloth was removed in the good old fashion, and the decanters placed on the polished mahogany, it would have been hard to find three happier gentlemen anywhere between the Solway Firth and the Shetland Isles.

"I like your dining-room, sir, almost as much as your hills," remarked Mr Venables, surveying the former serenely over a bumper of claret; "and you'll agree with me, that is saying a good deal in its favour."

Mr Moray did agree, and smiled complacently. Indeed Jack Venables could hardly have been suspected of flattery, and connoisseurs in very various styles of art might have expressed unmitigated approval. The room was unpretentious like the house—long, out of proportion to its breadth, and by no means lofty. But it had been turned into such a sylvan hall as might have suited the retreat of a Lord of the Isles or a Lady of the Lake. The trophies of the chase that profusely adorned the vestibule had overflowed into the dining-room. The walls were adorned with noble stags' heads, interspersed with those of roe-deer and grinning wild-cats. To each was attached a brief obituary notice,

and the inscriptions dated back for a couple of generations and more. Even tenants of the Glenconan shootings had taken pride in leaving some of the choicest of their spoils near the scenes where they had won them—the more so that each of the sportsmen left his name as well as a memory behind him. The golden eagle was setting in aerial dance to the osprey, which spread her wings in act to soar above the sideboard ; and beneath these a grizzled badger was snarling at an otter about to take a header off a moss-grown ledge. There were trout and salmon rods, and racks for guns and rifles in the corners, and a fair show of somewhat grim family portraits to boot. So far, the decorations, though you certainly could not call them commonplace, were what might have been seen in any Highland gentleman's halls. But then, by way of contrast, there glittered on the sideboard a mixed service of massive and curious plate—wine-coolers, tankards, salvers, and epergnes, of many dates and countries, and of the most artistic workmanship ; for Moray had a fancy that way, and his fancies had generally been gratified. A century and a half before, the mere rumour of so much portable wealth would have set all the clansmen and caterans by the ears between Lorne and Lochaber.

Jack Venables looked about him and went on : "I like the silver, I must say, even more than the stags' heads. There now ! I was sure I would startle you both ; but you need not look so scandalised, my dear Leslie. I'm not altogether so covetous as you might suppose, and a man may admire those magnificently chased salt-cellars, for example, without having the soul either of a pawnbroker or of a Benvenuto Cellini. But I like

them chiefly for all they mean. Had Glenconan lived his life in his native glen, we should have seen nothing on his walls save the antlers and his ancestors. Moreover, I may venture to remark, parenthetically, that I doubt whether we should have had Lafitte like this on the table. Now stalking deer in Glenconan is grand sport in its way ; but to be content with that, we should be born to the ambition, like Donald the keeper. The tankards, &c., are the veritable trophies that are worth the winning ; for they mean energy and adventure, and the excitement of success—the only things that make life worth the living. If I know myself, I'm nothing of a visionary : I believe in the blessings of riches, and realise their anxieties too, as much as anybody ; but I should be sorry all the same to have been born to a fortune—to a great fortune, that is to say. Of course I should go steadier as well as quicker if I had a certain amount of bullion to ballast me. Now all that silver means to me the romance of an extremely agreeable existence. Our Uncle Moray there has had far more than his fair share of success and fun ; and if he died to-morrow, he has every reason to be contented. There are not many men who have had the luck to find their way to wealth through jungles and spice-gardens—through *cordons* of Chinese junks and fleets of Malay proas. Why, even in the way of recreation and sport, tiger-shooting must be decidedly preferable to deer-stalking, though it is fortunate that Donald does not hear me blaspheming. But hit or miss, lose or win, you may depend upon it, Master Leslie, that excitement is everything, or pretty nearly so. Whether we are to carry off the stakes or no, at least we are sure of the pleasures of the game.'

Leslie smiled good-humouredly at his companion's long-winded rhapsody. As for Moray, though the young man had merely spoken in the light exhilaration of a restless and generous spirit, had he laid himself out to flatter and please his senior, he could hardly have succeeded more thoroughly. Moray had himself been ardent and enthusiastic, though with an eminently practical bent of mind and a resolute determination of purpose. He, too, had delighted in adventure in his time, and the ancient fires were still glowing in their ashes. He had loved bold speculations for their own sake—and the better that there was a spice of danger in them. And besides that, there was something in Venables's careless talk, in the readiness to welcome trials which might turn to temptations, that helped to reconcile himself to the past, and to soothe certain doubts and regrets

which had been casting their shadows across his happiness. It pleased him, too, to remember that money meant power—that he could give his sprightly young nephew the helping hand he wanted; and, moreover, other vague ideas regarding him began to take form and consistency. The faculty of reading the minds of other men is a gift that might be fatal or helpful, according to circumstances or temperaments. It is certain, at least, that it would work a social revolution, and upset all the existing arrangements of Providence. As it was, Mr Venables had been rattling on in utter heedlessness, and he never guessed how far his chatter might have a grave influence on his fortunes. And so the three, after a pleasant evening, went to bed, unconscious of all that was meant to them by that merry meeting at Glenconan.

CHAPTER II.—A BREAK-NECK SHOOTING EXPEDITION.

We say emphatically that June is the most enjoyable month in the Highlands, always supposing the weather to be conformable. And Highland weather is so capricious, that we may be lucky when we least expect it. There is no shooting in June—there is no deer-stalking. But then the fishing of all kinds should be in its very prime, which gives you a pretext for enjoying the glories of the scenery. The trees are in the freshest richness of their foliage; the grass is enamelled by the early wild-flowers; the bilberries, the crowberries, the cranberries, the many other berries, are putting out their brightest shoots; the bracken is bursting forth among the first bells of the foxgloves,—and as both of Glenconan's guests,

in their different ways, were keen and even passionate admirers of nature, they never found the time hang heavy on their hands. Moray was vexed at the arrival of his daughter being delayed, owing to the indisposition of the lady who was to be her chaperon as far as Perth. But the young men were comparatively indifferent to the advent of the heiress, and only expressed a decent amount of sympathy. To tell the truth, being very happy as they were, they philosophically dreaded any change in the habits of the establishment. They did as they pleased; they went abroad when they liked; and though the dinner was a movable feast, depending on the hour of their return, the cook might be relied upon to come satisfactorily

to time, independently of the hands of the clock. What with his fishing-rod and his sketch book, Jack Venables could always make himself thoroughly contented. When the trout were rising freely, his basket filled rapidly: he could cast a fly to the approval of Donald himself, and under the tuition of that skilful veteran he was rapidly being initiated in the special mysteries of mountain sport. When the trout were in no mood to take, whether in the loch, in the lakelets or in the streams, he seldom cared to persevere, and fell back on his brushes and color-box. Excitement in one shape or another was everything to him. He had a rare facility of touch, a wonderful instinct for colour; and the excitement he found in the ever-changing lights and scenes was unfailing. He was as happy in transferring a landscape bathed in sunshine and flecked with shadows to his block, as in switching the small brown trout over his shoulder; and his pulse beat nearly as quick to the lurid glories of a thundery sunset as when running a *Salmo ferox* on his trolling-rod where the lake broke away into the rapids.

As for Leslie, he took his pleasures more contemplatively, though not more sadly. In rallying him about his love for poetry, Moray had touched his strength or his weakness. He was a born poet, in perpetual sympathy with the poetical sides of things, though, so far as the world knew, his poetry had hitherto found no expression. He might be born for great things, or he might have been born to dream away remarkable talents. In the meantime, he could make himself placidly happy among the scenes which brought the exhilaration of enjoyment to his companion. No one could deny that there was a great deal in him. Not only had

he had a distinguished career at the university, but he could generally say the right thing at the right moment, though his remark might be somewhat slow of coming: if he would hang over a repartee, it seldom missed fire, and there was pretty sure to be a playful snap in it when it did come. Nevertheless, superficial observers of natures antipathetical to his own, might have set him down for a muff or a prig, especially if they had made his acquaintance in Highland shooting-quarters. He rarely handled a gun himself, though he liked to follow a shooting-party. Made very much after the fashion of a young Henry VIII., his somewhat bulky and cumbrous person would have adapted itself with difficulty to the inequalities of difficult ground in following out an awkward stalk; and when he did essay to throw a fly, his line was apt to fall in coils upon the water. Conscious of his own shortcomings, he neither cared to correct them nor to court failure. But he would lie on the bank for hours, watching Venables at work, his handsome features flushing over a struggle and a success; while in the intervals the thoughts that were wandering far away found ample occupation for his fertile fancy.

But a day came, in the second week of their sojourn, when the mercurial Venables felt bored, and he did not scruple to confess it. The fine weather had broken; leaden clouds lay heavy on the bosom of Lochconan, veiling the view of the opposite cliffs. The rapid fall of the barometer gave warning of a violent storm, though, as the fall had been sudden, the storm might be a passing one. As the little party were seated at breakfast, a peal of thunder seemed to burst among the chimney-pots and shake the room. Then dis-

charge followed discharge in swift succession. The clouds were rent by the vivid flashes of the forked lightning; the rain came down in torrents, the big drops plumping in the sullen waters of the lake like showers of lead sent from the summit of a shot-tower. Then gusts of wind, sweeping in circles down from the mountains, succeeded to the preternatural calm; in places the lower half of the black cloud-curtain was lifted and blown aside, while it hung motionless as before in the shelter of the cliffs; and through gaps and rifts you caught glimpses of the hills, lighted luridly for some seconds by the fires of the lightning; while all the time the echoes were being awakened far and near, and ere one roar had died away in remote rumblings, another had come to swallow the distant mutterings. It was Byron's thunderstorm, and not much in miniature; and it was Venables, and not Leslie, who made the obvious quotation—

"And Jura answers from her misty cloud," &c.

It was a grand spectacle while the thunderstorm lasted, and Jack had every reason to be pleased with it. He strode up and down the room, returning perpetually to the windows. He rubbed his hands, and expressed unqualified admiration of the effects, till the solemnity of the disturbance oppressed even him, and he relapsed into silence in sympathy with his companions. But the thunderstorm passed away, though the rain continued to come down in torrents; and if he still paced the morning-room at intervals, he was chafing at the enforced confinement.

"You certainly are the most restless and impatient of mortals, Jack," remarked Moray, good-naturedly. "Why, young man, if

you cannot bear a single day's rain most assuredly you were never made for the Highlands."

"Not at all, sir—not at all," answered the other, laughing; "and you mistake my character altogether. I've a deal more of practical philosophy than you suppose, as I hope you may have many opportunities of remarking. If I knew we were in for a week of wet weather, Leslie himself could not take it with more serene acquiescence. But as the pigs are said to smell a gale, so I scent fine weather again, and I'm only surprised that it is so long of appearing."

Whether Venables had the weather instincts to which he pretended or not, as it happened, he was right on this occasion. The clouds did break towards evening; and moreover, there was every promise of a fine day on the morrow. He observed in the smoking-room, after dinner, and *apropos* to nothing in particular—

"I mean to go on an exploring expedition to-morrow, to Lochrosque and the Braes of Balgarrooh."

"And I must say that you choose your time well," returned Moray, with a smile that was half kindly and half sarcastic. "Why, every one of the burns will be coming down in spate, and the peat-bogs will be holding the rain like so many sponges."

"And that, my dear uncle, is the very reason, or partly the reason. There will be no fishing till the rain runs off a bit; and I want exercise and excitement after the day's imprisonment. The streams will be flooded, it is true; but surely one can 'walk' or wade them somehow: and if the bogs be like sponges, as you say, why, my muscles want stretching."

"Stretched they will be, or strained or sprained: we should

have to fetch you home ignominiously on the back of a shooting-pony, and then you might have a chance of practising patience through a protracted term of confinement. No, my good boy, be guided by me. Go in for a walk to-morrow, by all means, but don't attempt the innermost recesses of our Dark Continent."

But if there was one thing on which Venables prided himself, it was in sticking to a pet scheme he had originated.

"Of course, if you put your veto on it, sir, I have nothing more to say; but even if there were a dash of risk in the expedition, as there is none, I know you would be the last man to grudge me the fun of it."

"Well, well, my good boy, you must go your own way. I suppose the worst that can happen, after all, is your being knocked up after a mud-bath in a moss-pit. Only, if you do go, you must be content to take one of the gillies. I send Donald to-morrow to Ding-wall after some dogs."

"And the absence of Donald is half the battle. Not that I do not appreciate his society. I never met a fellow who was better company. But Donald is as much at home among his hills as a policeman on his beat in Pall Mall; and no exploration can be possible when one is in charge of a dry-nurse. But I shall take Peter, if you will allow me. I want a man to carry a rifle."

"Take Peter, and carry a rifle? Is the boy mad? Why, Peter knows nothing of the country, and is the dullest lout on the ground. And for the rifle, it would only be so much dead-weight, for I fancy you do not propose to kill one of my deer in June."

"Not exactly. But I have a notion that I may have a shot all the same,—always supposing I arrive at the end of my pilgrimage.

And as for Peter, he is a fool, and as strong as a horse; and these are the qualities that recommend him to me as a follower. He will never feel the weight of the rifle, and will certainly not volunteer advice."

"Go your own way, as I said before," returned Moray, "and amuse yourself as you like. I have too much of the Highland hospitality to put restraint on a guest, even if he do happen to be crack-brained and a nephew of my own. Only remember, I wash my hands of all responsibility, and we refuse to wait dinner."

Leslie laughed and chimed in—

"Don't say 'we,' sir, when you talk of dinner. I cast in my lot with Jack Venables, always supposing he has no objection."

"Not in the least, my dear fellow—not in the least! I should have asked you, on the contrary, to accompany me, but I did not care to put the screw on. With you for a companion, and the worthy Peter for a beast of burden, I consider the expedition to be perfectly equipped. And whatever be the case with me, your exertions ought to reward you. There must be matter for a baker's dozen of lyrics among the mists and braes of Balgarroch."

The pair had made an early start. Five miles of the flat had been covered on ponies, which had subsequently been hobbled and turned loose to graze. It was in a delightful sense of freedom that the young men stretched their legs, and set their faces to breast the first slopes of the hills. As for Peter, he plodded along behind, bearing the rifle, and with a game-bag slung across his shoulders, containing whisky and sherry flasks, with the materials for luncheon. Peter's ordinary calling was that of a sea-fisherman: he usually listed with a shooting-

staff for the short shooting-season ; though this year the wages that were offered by Moray had tempted him to engage at the beginning of the summer.

Venables had got himself up in a kilt, which draped his lithe figure picturesquely enough ; and as he strode forward, although there was a long day before them, he sprang from tussock to tussock on the damp ground like a roebuck. As for Leslie, a loose shooting-coat and baggy knickerbockers half served to conceal any superfluity of flesh. But if his companion cut out the running, Leslie seemed likely to stay tolerably well ; and indeed he was no novice in pedestrianism. Both one and the other had done good work in the Alps ; and Leslie, weight and size notwithstanding, which somewhat unfitted him for crawling after deer, had been one of the first to scale the Aiguille de Taléfre.

"You can't possibly reproach me with premature curiosity, Master Jack ; but may I ask now, without indiscretion, what is the meaning of the rifle with which Peter is encumbered ?"

"Certainly ; and I owe you many apologies for not having anticipated your question. But there was something dramatically sensational in the blind confidence with which Sense was following the lead of Folly into the wilderness ; and besides, the betting is a hundred to ten that the rifle may never be brought into requisition. You remember how Donald in his 'cracks' the other night turned the conversation on the goats of Balgarroch."

"Oh, that's what we're after ! That's what sent us on this wild-goose—I beg pardon—on this wild-goat chase ! For Donald, if I remember aright, remarked by way of postscript, that the goats were unapproachable ; and the proof is, that

the patriarch, if rumour is to be credited, may have been born anywhere between now and the rising of the '45."

"'Must have been born,' you mean to say. The older he is, the greater the certainty that he must be falling back by this time into his second childhood. And of course, so long as there was a deer on the hills, no one of the deer-stalkers has dreamed of going after him. Long impunity must have bred the confidence I hope to abuse."

"Say it is so. But going after a family-party of wild goats over the Braes of Balgarroch must be like looking for a lot of needles in a bundle of hay."

"I don't know that. Donald said that at this season, when the hill-grazing is fresh, they stick pretty much to the precipices to the west of Lochrosque ; and somehow, and in spite of the Laird, I have a presentiment that we shall have a shot before the day is over. Anyhow, if I miss the mark, there is nobody to laugh ; for I breathed nothing of any possible intentions to Glenconan, and Peter is much too idiotic to see anything. The secret is safe with you, I am sure, for I know that 'Brutus is an honourable man.'"

Brutus laughed, and silently assented. The walking each moment was becoming more severe, and both the men were inclined to husband their breath.

It was lucky indeed that they were in fair condition. Venables had scarcely turned a hair, though he began to go more like a human being than a chamois ; and as for Leslie, if he showed greater signs of exertion, strength and pluck pulled him steadily through. They plunged through yielding peat-bogs up to the ankles, threading with many turns and precautions an

intricate network of trenches and moss-pits. They climbed hills where everything was slippery after the rain, from the roots of the heather plants to the surfaces of the flat stones. And shoulder to shoulder they stemmed the strength of streams, where the rush of the waters rose nearly to mid-thigh, and the shifting stones in the bottom gave treacherous foothold. The very sounds of animated nature were either wild or melancholy, in sad harmony with the solitude of those desolate wastes. The grouse brood fluttered up almost under their feet as they plunged their way through some patch of heather. The mountain-hare started up among the shingle and boulders, where she had been crouching in faith in the similarity of her colour. There was the piping of the lonely little moor-birds, and the shrill whistle of the shy curlew; and everywhere was the plaintive bleating of the sheep, gathered for the most part out of sight in the sheltered carries—for the ground they were then traversing lay beyond the limits of the deer-forest.

Both Venables and Leslie were glad enough to see the game-bag unslung and unpacked on the shore of Lochrosque. Bread and beef, cheese and oatcakes, were spread on the greensward, and Peter played an admirable clasp-knife, by way of symphony to the creditable performance of his masters. The day was still young, and there was time before them. Pipes and repose were veritable wisdom.

"Besides," as Venables remarked, "the worst of the work is over. I never was strong in figures, but we must have climbed 2000, or 3000, or 6000 feet, as the case may be."

Mr Venables's estimates might have been more exact, but it was evident, nevertheless, that they had attained a considerable altitude.

Lochrosque was very much a counterpart of Lochconan, infinitely more gloomy, but decidedly less grand. There was not a sign of a tree about its banks; and the heather had given place to coarse grass and granite *débris*. Here and there the low flat banks were broken by weather-beaten rocks, that seemed to have been hurled by some concussion from the heights above, and to have come bounding and rolling down the slopes, till they checked themselves at the bottom of the basin; while on the opposite side to where our friends were sitting hill rose behind hill. There was no such tremendous precipice-wall as that which frowned upon the south of Lochconan; but the hills were of granite, scantily clothed, and their garments were weather-stained and terribly tattered. Rough terraces of turf hung over clefts and abysses, and torrents had torn their way here and there from summits that were invisible from the banks of the lake. Altogether, it was as break-neck a piece of Highland scenery as ever tested the head or tried the lungs and legs of an amateur.

"So these are the famous Braes of Balgarroch," remarked Leslie; "and now, I imagine, you begin to comprehend how the years of the father of the goat family should be patriarchal. If he can manage to pick up a living among these cliffs, immortality must be chiefly a question of sure-footedness."

"It looks very like it," Venables was forced to admit, as his eye ranged from height to height rather disconsolately. "I begin to have a presentiment that previous presentiments may have played me false. It is a tough bit of work, and may be a long one, on the off-chance of our getting a glimpse of the goats. Happily I took the precaution of

leaving a line for 'Glenconan' in case of accident, to say that it was just on the cards we might camp out."

"You did, did you? Happily there go two words to that bargain, and I keep my further movements under my own control. In any case, though the days be long, we had better proceed to a survey of the country. We must cross the loch and turn that shoulder."

Peter unmoored a boat fastened under a shed, and the passage was speedily accomplished. Then the game-bag, with its reserves of food, was "cached," as they say in Western America; and hampered by nothing but the rifle, a deer-stalker's glass, and a spirit-flask, the trio commenced the climb.

Neither of the gentlemen, as has been said, were novices in the mountains, and they were by no means surprised at the piece of work cut out for them. The heights that had shut in the view from the loch-margin were merely the spurs and the shoulders of higher hills behind. Wilder and grander became the scenery as they mounted upwards—more difficult and more circuitous the walking. Sometimes the turn of a ledge brought them face to face with an insurmountable obstacle; frequently they had to descend into a ravine, that they might scramble up the opposite face, at a considerable expenditure of homespun and knee-leather. Many a time did Venables execrate the costume of the Celt in which he had draped the delicate limbs of a Saxon.

But as hunting-men will risk their necks for a bag-fox, or even a red herring, so the ostensible object of the walk was nothing to them. One was a poet, the other an artist, and artist and poet were ravished alike. The burning sun had drawn the damp from the soil

and the hills were wreathed in fantastic vapours. The very rocks were smoking and steaming, as if there were smouldering volcanic fires underneath. And now and again, when they looked down into unknown depths, they might well have been poisoning themselves, like Milton's Satan, on the borders of old Chaos and Eternal Night; for the billowy seas of grey shifting mists marked invisible possibilities of intensest desolation.

They had found breath enough to indulge in duets of sympathetic raptures, when Leslie, as the more practically-minded and thoughtful of the two, characteristically came back to the prose of the situation.

"I tell you what it is, my friend—should these mists begin to thicken, it may be more difficult to find our way back than you seem to fancy."

"Not a bit of it: it is only a fine-weather haze; and the vapours will vanish with the afternoon sunshine. There is a fine-weather feeling in the air: just you ask Peter."

Peter, proud of being appealed to, when the question was translated into more intelligible language, answered unhesitatingly in the affirmative. Indeed circumstances proved afterwards that he and Venables were right; and when they stood at last on the Pisgah-like summit of Ben-a-Gleish, the highest hill for a dozen of leagues around, everything was nearly as clear below as above, and the vault of heaven was of transparent azure.

It was high enough and bleak enough in all conscience. They had scared more than one pair of parent ptarmigan—the young broods had probably scuttled for refuge beneath the stones. A pile of Cyclopean blocks, pitched carelessly together, rose from a small square plateau of slate and shingle.

There was a bird's-eye view of a confused panorama of hill and valley, of black peat-moss and bright green corrie, interspersed with rills and streams winding their way towards lochs and rivers. But in due time the "prospect-glass" was supported against a walking-stick driven into the ground, and Venables having focussed his eye, was devoting himself to his immediate object. Leslie had lighted a pipe, and was looking on listlessly. He did not believe much in the chase, but he felt amply rewarded for the expedition—

When Venables in a stifled whisper, as if he had been breathing the words into a telephone of preternatural sensibility, summoned Peter to put an eye to the glass.

"Ay, it will be them, sure enough, sir," was the deliberate answer; "and it will not be that difficult to make the stalk upon the beasts, whatever."

Leslie motioned Peter aside, and took his turn of observation. Yes, there were the goats—the family-party; four of them were visible, and possibly there might be more.

"And the wind is favourable," whispered Venables, "as if the day had been arranged for us; and nothing worse than a long circuit to make—that's to say, if they don't shift. Once upon the top of that ridge of rock, and they ought to be within easy range."

It is an anxious moment when, after a lengthened stalk, you reach the spot you have been steering for by predetermined bearings. With Leslie and Peter following at a distance in his wake, Venables had dragged himself forward to the edge of the cliffs, and with a heart beating as if it would have burst his waistcoat-buttons, had he worn

a waistcoat, he drew a hand across his eyes to brush away the streaming perspiration,—then he turned his head in the direction where the goats might be. There they were, on a bit of grassy slope, within some seventy yards of him, and the shaggy-bearded ancient, with a pair of antediluvian-looking horns, was fully exposed. A conscious sense of certainty calmed his nerves. He pulled himself together, waited to regain breath, and sent his bullet in scientifically beneath the shoulder. Leslie and Peter ran forward—too late to see the goat take a header into vacancy, while his bereaved family made a bolt round the nearest convenient corner.

"There he is—there he lies!" exclaimed the excited sportsman, having changed his place, and craned over so recklessly that his friend was fain to hold on to him by his boots. "There he is! you can just get a sight of his hoofs, kicking away still under that shelf of granite."

"I see him," said Leslie quietly, after a moment or two. "And it's only a pity you did not leave the poor beggar in peace, since there is no possibility of recovering the body."

"Perhaps not. He weighs heavy, I dare say. I'll have the head and horns at any rate, you bet, as the Yankees say." And before Leslie could well interpose, Jack, who, with the intuition of genius, had surveyed the track, had swung himself over the edge, and was steadily though slowly descending.

Fucilis descensus, &c., has passed into a proverb; and we have it on immemorial French authority, that the first step is everything, or pretty nearly so. Venables proved the truth of the former maxim, but he had reason to question the wisdom of the second. He was a youth

much given over to impulses. Like Leslie, as we have said, he was used to mountain-climbing. He had the promptitude of pluck almost in excess—a spurt would carry him at any time through critical danger; and he had the confidence that came of his Alpine experiences. He picked his way steadily along an aerial and almost imperceptible path, though the blood of the more phlegmatic Leslie ran cool in watching him, and the usually imperturbable Peter tossed his arms in the air. But his impetuosity had not counted with contingencies, as when, after zigzagging backwards and forwards, all within the space of the seventy yards, taking his final spring to the broad shelf where the goat lay, the gravel yielded under his feet. The rainfall of yesterday had sapped the bank; and the path he had so deftly cleared was breached effectually.

Exaltation is invariably followed by reaction. Had it all been comparatively smooth navigation, Jack's pluck and spirit would have carried him through. Now he must have felt something like Icarus, when the wax was melting on the aeronaut's pinions; and a paralysing horror settled down upon him as he knew his retreat to be cut off. His eyes swam; his brain turned dizzy; and he did what was probably the wisest thing in the circumstances, and subsided on the ground with his back to the abyss.

Venables's brain was in a swimming turmoil of confusion, and had he been left to himself or to Peter, his bolt would certainly have been shot. While, as for Leslie, who had been looking on in speechless horror, his thoughts were never more clear or definite. He had weighed the circumstances in a moment, and he felt hopelessly de-

pressed. The life and death of his companion were hanging in the balance, and his interposition would probably in no degree avail. As for the dull and respectable Peter, he was paralysed. He was more at home, at the best of times, on the deck of a herring-boat than on the hills, and was made of any stuff rather than that of a hero. All in that supreme crisis depended upon Leslie—and the thoughts that were ordinarily somewhat sluggish had answered to the spur, and were working with the velocity of lightning. It was hopeless, or almost so, to save Venables; but it was absolutely impossible to go home without him. Fancy living on to tell the tale—or conceal it,—how he had left his comrade to perish within a stone-throw of him! Leslie was a gentleman and a Christian, but scarcely a saint. He was loath to leave life at a moment's notice, with all his misdeeds and mistakes unrepented of. But his feelings of chivalry were strong, and the sense of duty was imperious. He breathed from his heart the most earnest prayer for help and mercy he had ever in his life sent up to heaven, as he stepped in his turn over the cliff and followed in the track of Venables.

He made the leap over the breach comparatively easily. It tended only too decidedly down-hill, and his ponderous initial momentum aided him. The grave question was as to getting back; but that was a question to be solved in the future.

Seldom have severed friends been reunited under more serious circumstances; and the clasp of Venables's feverish hand repaid Leslie for the risk he had run. The presence and touch of his chivalrous friend were already restoring the courage of the other. There was this difference between

the two—in Venables the spirit had to fight the flesh; and he could only preserve a semblance of composure by manfully diverting his thoughts and turning his eyes away from the abyss. As for Leslie, without prying into his innermost secrets, it may be said that he could look dangers of all kinds calmly in the face. At least he gazed with less of apprehension than curiosity into the depths of the yawning chasm beneath; and before he had well exchanged a hand-shake with Venables, he was planning how they might retrace their steps. He knew he had never been so near to death, for he saw that the little gravel-platform on which they stood was already crumbling and yielding beneath their united weight. He knew there was no time to send the slow and stupid Peter to fetch help. They must save themselves, and that promptly, if they were to be saved at all. Venables was looking to him for support, encouragement, and guidance. So he proved himself true to his practical good sense—drew the whisky-flask from his pocket, and passed it to his friend.

"That's right, old fellow; take another little pull," as he watched the light come back to the eye and the colour to the cheek. "There, that will do. Wait till we are on the firm ground again before you mend your draught."

The cool promise of immediate safety did as much to restore Jack Venables's confidence as the inspiriting influences of the flask. For a few moments, at all events, he was himself again, and Leslie saw it was neck or nothing. Stoop-

ing, with infinite presence of mind and a swift sweep of his pocket-knife he cut the beard from the shaggy billy-goat.

"We won't bother about the horns," he observed, "but we must not go back without your trophy." And that very simple remark screwed the courage of Venables to the sticking-point. It was he who gave the lead over the gap, lightly bounding up upon the ground that gave way beneath him, and so with half-a-dozen successive springs placing himself in relative safety. And then he forgot all the danger that remained, in the moments of agony that the danger of his saviour caused him. There seemed a more formidable leap than ever to be made, and Leslie had little of the lightness and *élan* which had landed Venables in comparative security. For a second or so, it appeared that he had given himself up. He stood as his friend had left him, and covered his eyes with his hand. Then he essayed to cross, but in a very different fashion. If he had been setting his feet on the flags of a London pavement, he could not have trod more firmly, though the foothold in each instance was some scarcely preceptible niche in the hill-face. Will the feet support his fourteen stone, or will they not? Venables's heart almost ceased to beat, though Leslie appeared to be as composed as ever; and in another moment, in an unaffected burst of emotional gratitude, he had clasped his recovered friend in his arms. Had Leslie literally come back from the dead, he could hardly have been more warmly welcomed.

CHAPTER III.—“YOURS FOR LIFE OR DEATH.”

Our young friends bivouacked that night among the hills on the banks of Lochrosque. With the morning's toil and the afternoon's excitement, they felt they had done at least as much as was good for them, and prudently determined to “camp out.” The “shelter stone,” shaped something like a Breton dolman, with its Cyclopean blocks of rugged granite, offered them very tolerable quarters. They supped lightly; they slept pro-saically; they rose refreshed: so, hurrying them across the intervening bogs, we land them in sight of the house of Glenconan.

A great event had occurred in their absence. It is seldom that the master of a remote Highland residence has the chance of two thrilling sensations simultaneously; but that piece of fortune had happened to David Moray. While he was looking forward to a solitary dinner and a dull evening, his dearly loved daughter had turned up unexpectedly. Grace Moray had a dash of the romantic in her nature, and it pleased her to arrange a surprise for her father. The thought of the surprise that was in store for him beguiled the tediousness of a slow railway-journey; and as she paralysed the self-important station-master by her unexpected arrival, so she was enchanted to be thrown back on her own resources. It was a dramatically appropriate stage-introduction to her Highland home. The station-master offered her the hospitality of his cottage while a messenger was despatched for the parental waggonette. The impetuous young woman would hear nothing of the kind. She pressed a “machine” from the neighbouring posting-house into her service, the horse

having been captured with some difficulty in the unenclosed meadows where he was running loose. She mounted the machine with her maid, leaving the boxes to follow: and what between her excitement over the beauties of the drive, and her anticipation of the reception awaiting her, her rising spirits fairly ran away with her, overflowing in rapturous ejaculations and bright snatches of song.

She had hoped to delight her father, and she was amply satisfied. Moray, having made some changes in his toilet, had strolled out upon the gravel before sitting down to dinner; he cast an eye on the cart-track that led upwards toward Lochrosque, and turned away in slight disappointment. Although he had lived much alone in his time, he was naturally of a social disposition, and would have liked to have had dinner enlivened by a narrative of incident. When swinging round on his heel, before entering the hall, his eye was arrested by a vision on the lower road—a heavy dogcart was pulling up the steep, the driver walking by the horse's head; and in the carriage were fluttering female garments, while a white pocket-handkerchief was being flown by way of signal. He realised in a moment what had occurred, for the road the vehicle was following led nowhere except to Glenconan. Another moment, and he was striding hatless down the hill, as if he had started on a toe-and-heel match against time.

Grace Moray had arranged a semi-theatrical surprise, and the meeting made a very pretty tableau. On seeing an elderly gentleman come down at the double, the intelligent horse came promptly to a

standstill, and betook himself to cropping the grass by the wayside. So the young lady, in all security, could set one neatly booted foot on the wheel and take a flying leap into her father's arms. It was as well, perhaps, that her cousins did not witness the fervent embrace in which she was clasped before she was landed on the gravel. They could hardly have helped feeling envy and jealousy. As for the trim lady's-maid on the back seat and the shaggy-coated Highland driver, they looked on complacently and indifferently from their very opposite points of view.

Grace Moray had really been harmoniously as she was simply named; for there was grace in her shape and her every gesture. So it struck her father, and not for the first time, as he saw her posing on the carriage-wheel like a domestic Venus. The slight irregularity of her features only added to the piquancy of their expression; there was a laughing sweetness in her soft grey eyes, which seemed to speak of boundless capacities of affectionate companionship, with all the sympathetic versatility that can brighten a life. With the masses of her rich brown hair slightly ruffled under her Spanish hat by her father's hearty embrace, with her clear complexion heightened by the keen mountain-air, and with her eyes glowing with the light of health and beaming at once with excitement and tenderness, she was as desirable a young helpmate and mistress of an establishment as any fond father might wish to welcome.

Circumstances change cases, and there is no reckoning with the unexpected. A few minutes before, Moray had been longing for his male companions; now, he saw in their prolonged absence a special interposition of Providence. His

daughter, too, was very well content when she heard of the expedition that left her to a *tête-à-tête*. The early evening passed quickly enough: they had so much to say as to the present and the future. But when the shadows of the loitering Highland night began to fall, the girl began to feel uneasy. To her there were vague horrors and dangers in the solitudes of those trackless hills, which she had admired and nevertheless half shuddered at in the fading glories of the sunset. Sitting in the snug room watching through the open window, the shadows thickening and widening in the clear gloaming without, her fancy began to work uneasily. And though she knew nothing of the real risks, with which her father was familiar, her growing uneasiness began to communicate itself to him. Left to himself, he might scarcely have given a second thought to the absence of his young friends. Jack Venables's note had told him it was possible. For himself, he had run the gauntlet of serious dangers in his time, and, with innumerable hairbreadth escapes, had always fallen safely on his feet. A night on the hills of Glenconan had seemed nothing to him. Now, however, he found himself, to his own surprise, conjuring up visions of the rugged precipices above Lochrosque, with their precarious foothold and almost invisible goat-tracks; and he remembered Jack Venables's headstrong pluck and impetuous temperament. But he remembered at the same time that Jack was in good company; that Leslie was cool and prudent; that Peter, though stupid, was strong-bodied and trustworthy; and he tried to dismiss his doubts by saying to his daughter—

"Believe me, my dear, there is nothing whatever to be alarmed

about. Nothing worse can possibly happen to the boys than a cool bed among the heather, with colds in the head to follow. In any case, we can do nothing till the morning, for there are half-a-dozen ways home from Lochrosque. Go quietly to bed, and if they do not turn up for breakfast, we shall send off a party of the gillies to meet them, with materials to break their fast. Jack has always an undeniable appetite; and Leslie, though he takes it more leisurely, runs him hard with the knife and fork."

Grace professed herself so far satisfied, and bade her father good-night. But when he had left her in the pretty bedroom he had carefully seen arranged for her, her anxieties returned, and she sent her maid away. She threw the window open and gazed out upon the soft Highland night. She looked at her snow-white sheets and contrasted them with a couch in the heather. A bed in the heather was all very well; on the whole, she would have much enjoyed it herself. Couches of fragrant heather-shoots and verdant bracken associated themselves with all the witchery of Scottish poetry; and what could the soul wish better for a canopy than the star-studded vault of the northern heavens? But then there was another side to that picture. Those little-known cousins of hers—one or both—might be, and very possibly were, lying crippled or shattered at the bottom of the craigs, with the carrion-crows and ravens for their sole attendants. In short, when Miss Moray did make up her mind to go to bed, it was to anything rather than untroubled slumbers. Youth, fatigue, and the Highland air were lulling her into dreams, which were changing perpetually to grim phantasmagoria and nightmares. When she rose

in the early morning, the cold bath never was more welcome; and as it was, when she had kissed her father's cheek, he noticed the fading of the red Lancastrian roses that had been blooming the evening before in her face.

Meanwhile Leslie and Venables had been still earlier risers, though for very different reasons. Moray's shrewd knowledge of mankind had not deceived him, when he suggested that Jack, under stress of privation, would make a vigorous push for breakfast at Glenconan. Jack might not be sentimental—he was certainly shy as to expressing sentiments; nevertheless he had made an effort and a clutch at Leslie's hand, and said, "You may forget, my good fellow; but you may be sure that I never shall. Henceforward I am yours, for life or death."

Nor did he say much more in the course of the long morning's walk, though possibly, like the parrot of story, he may have thought the more. Till at last, from one of the lower ridges he lifted up his eyes, and saw certain moving figures in the middle-distance of the landscape.

"Look there, Leslie! A relief expedition sent out in search of us. If my note was duly delivered, for the life of me I can't understand the Laird. I should have said he was the very last man in the world to bother about the off-chance of a mishap."

"It's not very likely," Leslie admitted. "But time will show, so its no use troubling."

"So here you are at last," shouted Moray when they came within hail; and both the young men were astonished to observe that their good-natured host and uncle was decidedly flushed and choleric. "Here you are, after keeping the household in hot water through half the night,

and rousing some of us from our beds in the middle of our beauty-sleep."

Venables, although ordinarily imperturbable, was slightly taken aback for once. It was quite a new experience of his uncle, whom, as he flattered himself, he already knew pretty well. However, the next words of Mr Moray enlightened him.

"Your cousin Grace arrived yesterday evening, and I do believe she was up and about with day-break."

Venables whistled in silent soliloquy. Here was the solution of the riddle, and a wonderful instance of the power of paternal affection. "The revolution in our ways of life is beginning with a vengeance, and in this domestic breeze." And he added to himself with philosophical resignation, "I knew that girl would be a nuisance; and if I'm sorry, I can't say I'm surprised." Then recollecting himself, after congratulating her father with an *empressement* rather at variance with his real feelings, he hastened to speak of yesterday's escape, and was eloquent in his expressions of gratitude. He warmed as he spoke with deep feeling, and at another time he might have made sure of an attentive listener. But now Moray was almost as impatient as Leslie, who tried repeatedly to cut the story short. Moray was eager to hasten back and relieve his daughter's anxieties; and by common consent the pair of craisemen slackened their pace, leaving their uncle to go forward and announce their arrival.

The immediate upshot of the affair was to place the meeting of the cousins on an easier and more cordial footing than a longer acquaintance might have done. Grace had a placid nature, or at least

a naturally sweet temperament, which went far towards keeping her quiet and calm under any circumstances. But she had a lively imagination as well. She may have been fatigued by the journey, and instead of sleeping soundly as usual, she had passed a restless and anxious night. Her feelings had been overstrung in picturing all manner of distressing casualties—follies, as she tried to assure herself, which she had been ashamed to acknowledge to her father. But when she saw him hurrying home unaccompanied, she had made up her mind for the worst; and the reaction was as great as the relief, when she knew that her fears were unfounded. Profound thankfulness made her suddenly light-hearted again; and when the younger gentlemen were passing the gate of the short approach, her high spirits of the day before were more buoyant for their temporary depression.

It would have been difficult to imagine a prettier picture than that of the bright graceful figure in the doorway of the grim old house. And closer observation only brought out new beauties, as both Venables and Leslie were fain to admit. Their recollections, as they had seen her last, were of a tall, ungainly, and rather forward school-girl; while Moray, in answer to requests that had been by no means over-urgent, had refused to show his young friends her photograph, on the ground that no photographer had done her justice.

There the fond father was right. Jack Venables's first impression was one of unqualified admiration; and then and there he abjured the abominable heresy that the presence of his cousin could be anything but a gain. His second thoughts were as natural, if less romantic; and he remembered that he had passed

the night upon the hills without the means of paying attention to his toilet. To tell the truth, though without the more regular beauty of his friend's features, he was really a very good-looking young fellow, and need not have greatly troubled himself on that score. There are lanky-haired men who can never show to advantage unless they carry a pocket-comb and a stick of cosmetic about with them. As for Venables, he curled slightly like a well-bred spaniel, and could dispense with brush and comb upon occasion; the open collar of his flannel shirt set off a well-shaped neck to advantage, and the folds of a well-hung kilt did justice to his active figure; while a morning plunge in the cold depths of Loch-rosque had effaced every sign of fatigue and over-excitement. And the more portly Leslie, who, moreover, had never a trace of self-consciousness about him, carried himself naturally with an easy and high-bred air, that rose superior and indifferent to external circumstances. He would have looked the gentleman all the same, either in the solemn dignity of a Court suit and ruffles, or unpacked from the miscellaneous contents of a third-class carriage after a through-journey by oriental express from Calais to Constantinople.

First impressions go for a great deal after all, and in this case the first impressions were mutually agreeable. Of course I do not mean to hint for a moment that Miss Moray fell in love at first sight with either of her cousins, and far less with both of them. All I say is, that she saw no just cause or impediment why she should not feel for both, or either, the warmest cousinly regard. As for the young men, I should be sorry to speak so confidently. Jack Venables was impressionable, and

he knew it; and falling in love at first sight, on smaller provocation, was no very novel sensation with him. While Leslie, who had no experiences of the kind, and whose processes of thought were rather sure than swift, would have been incapable, in his innocent ignorance, of analysing any similar impulse.

"Now make haste and shift yourselves, my good boys, as we say in these parts," exclaimed Moray, entirely himself again, and beaming all over with cordiality. "Grace ought never to have such a chance again of knowing what is meant by Highland appetites."

The good boys responded nobly to the appeal. The broiled trout and the kippered salmon vanished as by enchantment. Bacon followed, crisp from the fender, arranged before the glowing fire of peat that corrected the freshness of the air from the open windows. Justice was done to a certain savoury grill; and some eggs were thrown in casually to fill the chinks, before the party proceeded to trifle with oatcakes, barley scones and preserves. Glenconan himself gave his nephews a lead across the table, making occasional casts by the sideboard and fireplace; while Grace, who was a maiden of mortal mould, kept the three gentlemen modestly in countenance. She was blessed with a healthy appetite, and felt no false scruples as to satisfying it. But when the meal was drawing to a close, and the men were playing with their teacups, Moray lay back in his chair and begged Venables to resume his story.

"The fact is," he remarked in brief apology, "that, being bothered over Grace, who was worrying herself very foolishly, I fear I cut you uncivilly short. You see, I saw you were both sound in wind

and limb; and had it not been for her, I don't think I should have troubled about you. If Jack had gone alone upon his madcap expedition, I don't say. But I thought that Ralph there had him in leading-strings, and would be sure to bring him back safe."

"I don't know about his holding me in leading-strings," broke in Mr Venables, impetuously. "I fear you overrate his influence on my foolhardiness. But I can tell you this, that had it not been for his pluck and presence of mind—for his deliberately exposing himself to almost inevitable destruction—I should never have come back except upon a stretcher, and I doubt greatly whether even Donald would have dared to go down and pick up the pieces. It was an ugly place"—as he spoke, he shuddered—"and it will be long before I forgive myself for risking such a life as Ralph's by my own absurd and pigheaded folly."

Leslie, embarrassed for once, was blushing like a girl, as Moray got up to slap him on the shoulder, with a blow that expressed the strength of his feelings. Grace sat behind the tea-urn with flushed face and swimming eyes, looking from one to the other of the young men with infinite kindness and admiration. Venables for one moment would have given a good deal if the exciting story could have been told the other way, and if he had been figuring there in the rôle of saviour. But he hastened to dismiss the unworthy thought; if it did flit across his mind, the story gained in the telling thereby. He had the gifts of a *raconteur*: he put the situations dramatically; he painted his own feelings of self-abandonment and despair; he did not even spare himself the imputations of cowardice as the earth was swimming before his eyes and his

thoughts went whirling wildly towards Eternity. Then he imagined Leslie's chivalrous resolution of self-sacrifice with the quick intuition that belonged to him, and described the courage he had himself drawn in his extremity from contact with the stronger and more heroic temperament.

"Coming over the cliff was comparatively nothing," he concluded. "It was the sort of thing any fellow was bound to do, rather than go back alone and admit that he had not tried it; but having done so much, I believe ninety-nine out of a hundred would have only thought of how they were to get back again, and they, with the hundredth, would have been puzzled to manage it. I daresay Leslie loves his life as much as another, and yet he never gave a thought to it while mine was in peril. He was cooler when making a balustrade of himself between me and the abyss, and trying to scrape a foothold for the pair of us with his nailed shooting-boots, than he is as he sits behind his teacup, wishing himself anywhere else."

A peroration which gave Leslie the longed-for pretext for proposing an adjournment for a pipe at the kennels. Nor was Miss Moray very sorry to be left alone, in a state between smiling and crying. Seriously inclining her pretty ear, like Desdemona, she had been strongly moved by Jack's animated tale, sympathising almost less with his hairbreadth escape than with his generous manner of narrating it. And on the other hand like Rebecca in 'Ivanhoe,' Venables had been "painting a hero," and the hero had been sitting modestly beside her. She could hardly say which of her cousins had interested her most; she only knew that she felt herself strongly attracted towards both of them.

A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

THE soldier of fortune is one of the most picturesque figures in the strange and shifting panorama, so full of brilliant colours and effective groupings, of the middle ages. A general who changes his colours as he changes his boots—whose services and those of his mail-clad rovers are at the disposition of whoever can pay the highest price, and whose passage from one side to another decides the fortune perhaps of a generation, the triumph of a cause, the rise or downfall of a race, without interesting himself more than they interest the horse he rides—is not a character which attracts the reader so late in the history of the world as we are, and used to national wars and national causes of a very different kind. But in mediæval Italy the position of the mercenary was one which involved no such serious issues as might exist nowadays, could we conceive the possibility of a wandering army ready to take part on either side according to the inducements held out to them. The existence of such a body now would be practically impossible, however; and even the suggestion is so inconsistent with all the facts of modern life, that we can attempt no illustration of it by anything we know. An Arab tribe drawn from the standards of the Mahdi to assist our advance, would at least be, after a sort, fighting for (or against)

“The ashes of their fathers
And the temples of their gods.”

But the *condottiero* of the fifteenth century had neither fathers nor altars, save perhaps in some far-off village which was not in the struggle and was free to turn his

hand against any man, with the reassuring conviction that, whoever was the master, his own interests would come to no harm.

The system was never one that flourished in England. Yet it was not unknown even in our island. Who does not remember the gay De Bracy, whose free-lances helped to keep the Saxons under in the days of Ivanhoe? And our history is not without more trustworthy records of bands whose hire gave importance to a popular rising or swelled the ranks of civil war. And England and Scotland both contributed to the number of those stout fighting men, superabundant at home, who found a field for their prowess in the perpetual conflicts always going on on the Continent. Dugald Dalgetty served Gustavus Adolphus and the Emperor by turns with a noble impartiality; and many a ballad records the fate of a romantic Roland or a stubborn John who went “to seek his fortune in the Hie Germanie.” It might afford an outlet for the surplus forces of athletic young gentlemen whom it is so difficult to know how to dispose of, were the old custom resuscitated like so many others. A Devil’s Own Company of briefless barristers, a brigade of free-lances recruited at the universities, might then be fit for honourable use wherever wanted; and with a succession of wars on our hands such as we have, and seem likely to have, the institution might be a most useful one. A Gordon regiment, for instance—what finer memorial to the dead hero!—not to be hired out to President Grévy or Prince Bismarck indeed, which might perhaps be

more in the spirit of the original, but to be at their own country's service whenever required. The existence of such a body as Methuen's Horse is a proof that this would not be impossible.

It is with no such chivalrous service, however, that we have now to do. No condition of society could be more appropriate for the creation of the mercenary soldier than the state of Italy in those centuries of art and glory, of murder and rapine, which are called, according to the taste of the critic, the Dark Ages, or the Ages of Faith. That great and noble country, beloved of all men, the home of all that is beautiful and glorious, which has lately, by an inspiration, unequalled in the history of nations, performed the old miracle of the fable and bound all its suffering particles, all the loose sticks which were at every conqueror's mercy, into a fagot which Hercules might attempt in vain—Italy, which beyond all hope has become one of the great Powers of Europe—was then no country at all, but a succession of arrogant and wealthy cities, of little principalities and dukedoms, all hating each other with a fervour such as only close neighbourhood brings, bent on each other's subjugation as the one thing of importance outside their several walls, or bent on preserving their own tumultuous and fantastic but vigorous freedom against a succession of petty despots within. Supposing a wholesome-minded and sound headed *condottiero* of the fifteenth century to have troubled his mind about the matter, which was highly improbable, there was little principle involved in the questions between Florence and Pisa, between Venice and Genoa, except that determination to show which was the better man,—to make one's

neighbour knock under, and enrich one's self at his expense—which is one of the best understood rules of primitive life. And for a Savoyard coming to the richer plains to seek his fortune, what could be less important than the question, which of those wealthy paymasters he should take service under? The firm resolve of the proud citizens to have no yoke about their own necks, and to forge double coils around each neighbour's; their prudent consciousness that to carry this resolve out with their own hands would impair trade and generally interfere with the comfort of their world,—were to the men of war the very conditions essential for their own trade, which was not perhaps, at that period and in these circumstances, so very noble a one as arms have generally been considered to be. One of its chief dangers was the unlucky accident that occurred now and then, when a general who failed of being invariably successful had his head taken off by the Signoria to whom he had engaged himself. But fighting of itself was not dangerous, at least to the troops engaged, and spoils were plentiful, and the life a merry one. Italy, always rich in the bounties of nature, had never been so rich as in these days, and the troops had a succession of villages at their command always, with the larger morsels of a rich town to sack now and then, ransoms of prisoners, and all the other chances of war. Their battles were exercises of skill rather than encounters of personal opponents, and it was not unusual to achieve a great feat of arms and rout an enemy without shedding a drop of blood. The bloodshed was that of the hapless non-combatants, the villagers, the harmless town-folk who were mad enough to resist the mailed sav-

ages, but not that of the fighting men.

Such was the profession, when a wandering Savoyard trooper—perhaps come home with his spoils in filial piety, or to make glad the heart of a rustic love with trinkets dragged from the ears or pulled bloody from the throat of some Lombard maiden—took note among the fields of a keen-eyed boy, who carried his shaggy locks with such an *aria fiera*, so proud an air, that the soldier saw something beyond the common recruit in this young shepherd lad. Romance, like nature, is pretty much the same in all regions; and young Francesco, the peasant's son, under the big frontier tower of Carmagnola, makes us think with a smile of young Norval "on the Grampian Hills"—that noble young hero whose history has unfortunately fallen into derision. But in those days, when the fifteenth century had just begun, and through all the Continent there was nothing heard but the clatter of mail and the tread of the war-horse, there was nothing ridiculous in the idea, that the boy, hearing of battles, should long "to follow to the field some warlike lord," or should leave the sheep to shift for themselves, and go off with the bold companion who had such stories of siege and fight to tell. He seems to have entered at once the service of Facino Cane, one of the greatest generals of the time, under whom he rose, while still quite young, to some distinction. Such, at least, would seem to have been the case, since one of the first notices in history of the young Piedmontese is the record in one of the old chronicles of a question, made to Facino—Why did he not promote him? To which the great *condottiero* replied that he could not do so—the rustic arrogance of

Francesco being such, that if he got one step he would never be satisfied till he was chief of all. For this reason, though his military genius was allowed full scope, he was kept in as much subjection as possible, and had but ten horsemen under him, and small honour as far as could be seen; yet he was noted of the captains as a man born to be something beyond the ordinary level when his day should come.

The Italian world was as usual in a state of great disturbance in these days. Giovanni or Gian Galeazzo, the Duke of Milan, had died, leaving two sons—the one who succeeded him, Gian Maria, being a feeble and vicious youth, of whose folly and weakness the usual advantages were soon taken. Sovereignty was never a thing to be much reckoned on in those little restless fortified and fighting towns, where every municipality was always straining after freedom,—a little republic of its own if might be: or if not, a new ruler, from whom, perhaps, an additional concession of liberties might be got. When the young Duke was found to be so little worth reckoning on, the cities of Lombardy sprang with wonderful unanimity each into a revolution of its own. The generals who on occasion had served the house of Visconti faithfully enough, found now the opportunity to which these free-lances were always looking forward, and established themselves each with hopes of founding a new dukedom, and little independent dominion of his own, in the revolted cities. Piacenza, Parma, Cremona, Lodi, all found thus a new sovereign, with a ready-made army to back him. The Duke's younger brother, Filippo Maria, had been left by his father in possession of the town of Pavia, a younger son's inheri-

tance ; but Facino Cane made light of this previous settlement, and in the new position of affairs, with the house of Visconti visibly going down-hill, took possession of the city, retaining young Philip as half guest, half prisoner. When matters were in this woful state, the Duke was assassinated in Milan, and the prospects of the Visconti seemed at the lowest ebb. But on the very same day Facino died in Pavia, and this incident brought in an immediate element of hope.

It would seem that the death of his general raised Francesco of Carmagnola at once into the front of the Captains who remained. He had taken the name of his village, perhaps by reason of the want of surname, which was common to Italian peasants, and which probably told more among the *condottieri*, whose ranks included many of the best names of Italy, than it did in art. With that preference for the christian name which is still so curious in Italy, Carmagnola is called Francesco throughout one at least of the old histories which record his exploits; but there are so many other Francescos, that the custom is confusing. Carmagnola found himself a person of much additional importance when Facino died, though he was still very young, not more than twenty-two. But he would seem to have had sufficient sense and insight to perceive that, by interfering in this great crisis, and binding to himself one way or other the great family of the Visconti, he would do better for himself than by following the example of the elder generals, and setting up a little independent tyranny of his own. It is said that he offered his services first to Astorre Visconti, an illegitimate member of the family who had seized on Milan when the Duke

was killed, but that the usurper's pay was not liberal enough to satisfy him. At all events, he put himself at the disposition of young Philip, who had now succeeded nominally to the dukedom of Milan, but was, so far as facts went, as much an adventurer as Carmagnola himself ; although the changed aspect of affairs in Pavia, where now there was no one but Facino's widow, the fair Beatrice of Tenda, to keep the turbulent population and soldiery in hand, and to restrain the movements of the young prince, made a wonderful difference in the position. Carmagnola's offer of service put Philip at once at the head of an army, and opened to him the way of fortune. With the ease with which such domestic incidents were accomplished in those days, he married Beatrice, thus securing Pavia, and all Facino's possessions. Whether she had previously cast a favourable eye upon the captive prince from the side of her scarred and deaf old general, history says not : her tragedy came afterwards, poor lady, when it suited the great Duke to get rid of the woman upon whom his fortunes were founded. But for the moment Beatrice and Carmagnola were all-important to him.

The first step after securing these invaluable aids was to gain possession of Milan, where the rival Astorre was killed ; and after this all was success for Philip's arms. Carmagnola, as commander-in-chief of the Duke of Milan's forces, re-conquered one by one the revolted cities. It was a slow process—for those were days in which everything was done by rule, when the troops retired into winter-quarters in due season, and a campaign was a leisurely performance, attended by little danger except to the unfortunate inhabi-

tants of the district in which it was carried on. Neither soldiers nor generals had any wish to hurry; it suited everybody better to take a great deal of time over their work, though perhaps not with the counterbalancing advantage of doing it well; the great *condottieri* had always a view to future eventualities, when it might, for aught they knew, be their duty to undo all they were doing, and take the other side.

Carmagnola, however, had no inducement for a long time to contemplate any such possibility. His services to Philip were largely and liberally rewarded. A kinswoman of Philip's, a lady of the Visconti family, whose first husband had been high in the Duke's confidence, became his wife, and the privilege of bearing the name of Visconti and the arms of the reigning house was conferred upon him. He was not only the commander-in-chief of the troops, but held a high place at Court, and was one of the chief and most trusted of Philip's counsellors. The Piedmontese soldier was still a young man when all these glories came upon him, with accompanying wealth, due also to Philip's favour, as well as to the booty won in Philip's cause. He seems to have lived in Milan in a state conformable to these high pretensions and to the position of his wife, and was in the act of building himself a great palace, not known as the Bioletti, and appropriated to public use, when the usual fate of a favourite began to shadow over him. This was in the year 1424, twelve years after he had thrown in his fate with the prince in Pavia. The difference in Philip's position was wonderful. He had then possessed nothing save a doubtful claim on the city where he was an exile and prisoner. He was now one of the greatest powers

in Italy, respected and feared by his neighbours, the master of twenty rich cities, and of all the wealthy Lombard plains. To these Carmagnola had lately added the rich prize of Genoa, superbest of northern towns with her seaboard and trade, a magnificent addition to any prince's crown. Perhaps this last feat had unduly exalted the soldier, and made him feel himself as a conqueror something more than the Duke's humble kinsman and counsellor: at all events, the eve of the change had come.

The tenure of a favourite's favour is always uncertain and precarious. In those days there were many who rose to the heights of fame only to be tumbled headlong in a moment from that dazzling eminence. When they were in the service of a republic, the jealousy of their official masters was excited by every act more splendid than usual, or which threatened to give a preponderating influence; and in case of defeat their shrift was still shorter, and the name of traitor made the scaffold shameful on which the unlucky captain had to expiate his failure. With an individual master his case was little better, for the potentate was bound to have a score of flatterers at his ear ever ready to build their own advancement on the ruin of their predecessor, and eager to collect every particular of his proceedings, and whisper every evil interpretation possible. Carmagnola was at the very height of fortune when clouds began to gather over his career. He was governor of Genoa, which he had conquered, and holding his state there perhaps too like a prince. Though no idea of treachery was then imputed to him, he had been if anything too zealous for his Duke, to whose service in the meantime, as to that of a great and conquering prince, full of schemes for

enlarging his own territory and affording much occupation for a brave soldiery, many other commanders had flocked, and envious eyes were fixed upon all his proceedings. The enemies of Carmagnola were many. Generals whom he had beaten felt their downfall all the greater that it had been accomplished by a fellow without any blood worth speaking of in his veins; and others were too proud to serve under him whom it would have pleased Philip to secure.

The first sign which the doomed general received of his failing favour was a demand from Philip for the squadron of horsemen, 300 in number, who seemed to have been Carmagnola's special troop, and for whom the Duke declared that he had a particular use. The reply of the general is at once picturesque and pathetic. He implored Philip not to take the weapons out of the hands of a man born and bred in the midst of arms, and to whom life would be bare indeed without his soldiers. As a matter of fact, it is to be presumed that this was but the thin edge of the wedge, and that other indignities were prepared to follow. The clique at Milan who were furthering his downfall were led by two courtiers, Riccio and Lampugnano. "Much better," says Bigli, the historian of the quarrel, "would it have been for our State had such men as these never been born. They kept everything from the Duke except what it pleased him to learn. And it was easy for them to fill the mind of Philip with suspicions, for he himself began to wish that Francesco Carmagnola should not appear so great a man." Carmagnola received no answer to his remonstrance, and by-and-by discovered, what is galling in all circumstances, and in his especially so, that the

matter had been decided by all the gossips of the Court, and that it was a conspiracy of his enemies, who were settling his fate. Fierce and full of irritation, a man who could never at any time restrain his masterful temper, and still, no doubt, with much in him of the arrogant rustic whom Facino could not make a captain of, lest he should at once clutch at the baton, Carmagnola determined to face his enemies and plead his own cause before his prince. The Duke was at Abbiate-grasso, on the borders of Piedmont, a frontier fortress, where probably he had gone to refresh himself with the air from the hills, for he was "in retirement," Bigli says, but with his Court and his counsellors round him. It was not far from Genoa, and thither Carmagnola rode with few attendants, no doubt breathing fire and flame, and in his consciousness of all he had done for Philip, very confident of turning the tables upon his miserable assailants, and making an end of them and their wiles. His letters had not been answered,—no notice whatever had been taken of his appeal; but still it seemed impossible to doubt that Philip, with his trusty champion before him, would remember all that had passed between them, and all that Francesco had done, and do him justice. His swift setting out to put all right, with an angry contempt of his assailants, but absolute confidence in the renewal of his old influence as soon as Philip should see him, might be paralleled in many a quarrel. For nothing is so difficult as to teach a generous and impulsive man that the friend for whom he has done too much, may suddenly become incapable of bearing the burden of obligation and gratitude.

Arrived at Abbiate, he was about

to ride over the bridge into the castle, when he was stopped by the guards, whose orders were to hinder his entrance. This to the commander-in-chief was an extraordinary insult; but at first astonishment was the only feeling Carmagnola evidenced. He sent word to Philip that he was there desiring an audience, and waited with his handful of men, the horses pawing the ground, their riders chafing at the compulsory pause, which no one understood. But instead of being then admitted with apologies and excuses, as perhaps Carmagnola still hoped, the answer sent him was that Philip was busy, but that he might communicate what he had to say to Riccio. Curbing his rage, the proud soldier sent another message to the effect that he had certain private matters for the Duke's ear alone. To this no reply was given. The situation is wonderfully striking, and full of dramatic force. Carmagnola and his handful of men on one side of the bridge; the castle rising on the other with all its towers and bastions dark against the sky; the half-frightened yet half-insolent guards trembling at their own temerity, yet glad enough to have a hand in the discomfiture of the rustic commander, the arrogant and high-handed captain, who of his origin was no better than they. The parley seems to have gone on for some time, during which Carmagnola was held at bay by the attendants, who could make him no answer other than the reference to Riccio, his well-known enemy. Then as he scanned the dark unresponsive towers with angry eyes, he saw, or thought he saw, the face of Philip himself at a loophole. This lit the smouldering fire of passion. He raised his voice—no small voice it may well be believed—and shouted forth his mes-

sage to his ungrateful master. "Since I cannot speak before my lord the Duke," he cried, "I call God to witness my innocence and faithfulness to him. I have not been guilty even of imagining evil against him. I have never taken thought for myself, for my blood or my life, in comparison with the name and power of Philip." Then, "carried on in the insolence of his words," says the chronicle, "he accused the perfidious traitors, and called God to witness that in a short time he would make them feel the want of one whom the Duke refused to hear."

And so speaking he turned his horse, and took his way towards the river. When the conspirators in the castle saw the direction he was taking, a thrill of alarm seems to have moved them, and one of them, Oldrado, dashed forth from the gates with a band of followers to prevent Carmagnola from crossing the Ticino, which was then the boundary of Savoy. But when he saw the great captain "riding furiously across the fields" towards Ticino, the heart of the pursuer failed him. Carmagnola would seem never to have paused to think—which was not the fashion of his time—but, carried along in headlong impulse, wild with the thought of his dozen years of service so important, all forgotten in a moment, did not draw bridle till he reached the castle of the Duke of Savoy, his native prince, to whom he immediately offered himself and his services, telling his story of wrong with all the vehemence of his feelings. Notwithstanding his fury, he seems to have exonerated Philip,—a doubtful compliment, since he held him up to the contempt of his brother potentate as influenced by the rabble of his Court, "the singers, actors, and inventors of all crimes, who make

use of the labours of others in order to live in sloth." Mere vituperation of Philip's advisers would not, however, have served his purpose, and Carmagnola artfully suggested to Duke Amadeo certain towns more justly his than Philip's—Asti, Alessandria, and others which it would not be difficult to name. Did ever monarch refuse to listen to such a scheme? None, at least in the fifteenth century. But Amadeo, thought sorely tempted, was not strong enough to declare war by himself against the great Duke, into whom, by Carmagnola's help, the once friendless Philip had grown. But the fiery visitor left excitement and commotion behind him when, making his way across a spur of the Pennine Alps by Trent and Treviso (but as secretly as he could while among the mountains, lest the Swiss, whom he had beaten, should hear of his passage and take vengeance), he came to Venice to stir up a still more effectual ferment there.

Whether he was joined by his three hundred spears—the troop which Philip had attempted to take from him—we are not told; but when he made his offer of service to the Doge and Signoria, we are told that he was accompanied by a similar number; so that there seems little doubt they had hurried out of Genoa after him as soon as his flight was known.

We are now brought within sight of the storm gathering against Milan, which made the Duke's insulting behaviour to his best general look like that madness which smites the man whom the gods mean to ruin. It is possible that some information on the subject of this proposed league was the private news which Carmagnola was so anxious to communicate to Philip, along with the story of his own wrongs; and no doubt a con-

sciousness of the impending combination gave his hot expedition to Duke Amadeo a meaning and purpose. Before his arrival at Venice, or rather Treviso,—where, near enough to communicate with the authorities, but not to disturb their deliberations by his presence, he remained while the subject was being discussed,—overtures, or rather supplications from the Florentines, whose very city was hard pressed by Philip's troops, and who felt their sanctuary of greatness and freedom to be in imminent danger, had reached the Venetian Government, and several ambassadors had been sent to Philip to remonstrate and plead for the great rival yet sister city. Rivalships there might be in time of peace and security; but the rulers of Venice regarded "with much gravity, and lamented deeply, the adversity of a free people, determining that whosoever would retain the friendship of Venice should be at peace with Florence." To this effect the ambassadors pleaded and with apparent success. Philip received them with politeness and seeming acquiescence, but did not stop the advance of his army. The speech of the last of these messengers, which is given by the Venetian chronicler Sabellico, shows with what a high tone the magnificent Signory addressed the neighbouring magnates of Italy. Venetians and Florentines both made short work with the independence of others; but yet there is something noble in the air with which they vindicate their own. The speaker was Paolo Cornaro, a member of one of the greatest families of Venice.

"To the Venetians nothing is more dear than freedom, to the preservation of which they are called by justice, mercy, religion, and every other law both public and private, counting

nothing more praiseworthy than what is done to this end. And neither treaties nor laws, nor any other reason divine or human, can make them depart from this, that before everything freedom must be secured. And in so far as regards the present case, the Venetians hold themselves as much bound to bestir themselves when Florence is in danger, as if the army of Philip was on the frontier of their own dominion; for it becomes those who have freedom themselves to be careful of that of others: and as the republican forms of government possessed by Florence resemble greatly their own, their case is like that of those who suffer no less in the sufferings of their brethren and relations, than if the misfortune was theirs. Nor is there any doubt that he who in Tuscany contends against freedom, in every other place will do the same, as is the custom of tyrants—who have ever the name of freedom in abhorrence."

The speaker ends by declaring that if Philip carries on his assaults against the Florentines, Venice, for her own safety, as well as for that of her sister city, will declare war against him as a tyrant and an enemy. "This oration much disturbed the soul of Philip." But he was full of the intoxication of success, and surrounded by a light-hearted Court, to whom victory had become a commonplace. The *giovanetti dishonestissimi*, foolish young courtiers who, from the time of King Rehoboam, have led young princess astray, whose jeers and wiles had driven Carmagnola away, were not to be daunted by the grave looks of the noble Venetian, whom, no doubt, they felt themselves capable of laughing and flattering out of his seriousness.

The next scene of the drama takes place in Venice, to which Philip sent an embassy to answer the mission of Cornaro, led by the same Oldrado who had made that ineffectual rush after Carmagnola from the castle gates, and who was

one of his chief enemies. An embassy from Florence arrived at the same time, and the presence of these two opposing bands filled with interest and excitement the City of the Sea, where a new thing was received with as much delight as in Athens of old, and where the warlike spirit was always so ready to light up. The keen eyes of the townsfolk seized at once upon the difference so visible in the two parties. The Milanese, ruffling in their fine clothes, went about the city gaily, as if they had come for no other purpose than to see the sights, which, says Bigli, who was himself of Milan, and probably thought a great deal too much fuss was made about this wonderful sea-city, seemed ridiculous to the Venetians, so that they almost believed the Duke was making a jest of them. The Florentines, on the contrary, grave as was their fashion and doubly serious in the dangerous position of their affairs, went about the streets "as if in mourning," eagerly addressing everybody who might be of service to them. Sabellico gives a similar account of the two parties.

"There might then be seen in the city divers ambassadors of divers demeanour," he says. "Lorenzo (the Florentine), as was befitting, showed the sadness and humble condition of his country, seeking to speak with the senators even in the streets, following them to their houses, and neglecting nothing which might be to the profit of the embassy. On the other hand, those of Philip, not to speak of their pomp, and decorations of many kinds, full of hope and confidence, went gazing about the city so marvellously built, such as they had never seen before, full of wonder how all these things of the earth could be placed upon the sea. And they replied cheerfully to all who saluted them, showing in their faces, in their eyes, by all they said, and, in short, by every outward sign of satisfaction.

the prosperity of their duke and country."

The dark figure of the Florentine, awaiting anxiously the red-robed senator as he made his way across the Piazza, or hurrying after him through the narrow Calli, while this gay band, in all their finery, swept by, must have made an impressive comment upon the crisis in which so much was involved. While the Milanese swam in a gondola, or gazed at the marbles on the walls, or here and there an early mosaic, all blazing, like themselves, in crimson and gold, the ambassador, upon whose pleading hung the dear life of Florence, haunted the bridges and the street-corners, letting nobody pass that could help him. "How goes the cause to-day, illustrious signor?" one can hear him saying. "What hope for my country, *la patria mia*? Will the noble Signora hear me speak? Will it be given me to plead my cause before their Magnificences?" Or in a bolder tone, "Our cause is yours, most noble sir, though it may not seem so now. If Philip sets his foot on the neck of Florence, which never shall be while I live, how long will it be, think you, before his trumpets sound at Mestre over the marshes, before he has stirred your Istrians to revolt?" The senators passing to and fro, perhaps in the early morning after a long night in the council-chamber, as happened sometimes, had their steps waylaid by this earnest advocate. The Venetians were more given to gaiety than their brothers from the Arno, but they were men who before everything else cared for their own constitution, their freedom, such as it was, their independence; and the stranger with his rugged Tuscan features and dark dress, and keen unhar-

monious accent, among all their soft Venetian talk, no doubt impressed the imagination of a susceptible race. Whereas the Milanese gallants, in their gaiety affecting to see no serious object in their mission, commended themselves only to the light-minded, not to the fathers of the city. And when Carmagnola, the great soldier known of all men—he who had set Philip back upon his throne as everybody knew, and won so many battles and cities—with all the romantic interest of a hero and an injured man, came across the lagoon and landed at the Piazzeta between the fated pillars, how he and his scarred and bearded men-at-arms must have looked at the gay courtiers with their jests and laughter, who on their side could scarcely fail to shrink a little when the man whose ruin they had plotted went past them to say his say before the Signoria, in a sense fatally different from theirs, as they must have known.

The speeches of the contending advocates are all given at length in the minute and graphic chronicle. The first to appear before the Doge and Senate was Lorenzi Ridolfi, the Florentine, who conjoins his earnest pleading for aid to his own state with passionate admonitions and warnings, that if Venice gives no help to avert the consequences, her fate will soon be the same. "Serene Prince and illustrious senators," he cries, "even if I were silent you would understand what I came here to seek."

"And those who would understand, who have seen us leave Tuscany and come here in haste, ambassadors from a free city to ask a favour and help for the promotion of our liberties from a free people like yourselves. The object of all my speaking is this, to induce you to grant safety to my

country, which has brought forth and bred me, and given me honour, and credit—which, if I can attain, and that you should join the confederation and friendship of the Florentines, and join your army with our Tuscans against the cruellest tyrant, enemy of our liberties, and hating yours, happy shall be my errand, and my country will embrace me with joy on my return. And our citizens who live in this sole hope, will hold themselves and their city by your bounty alone to be saved from every peril. . . . I tremble, noble Prince, in this place to say that which I feel in my soul. But because it is necessary I will say it: if you will not make this alliance with us, Philip will find himself able without help, having overthrown Florence, to secure also the dominion of Venice. If it should be answered me that the Venetians always keep their promises and engagements, I pray and implore the most high God that, having given you goodness and faith to keep your promises, He would give you to know the arts and motives of this tyrant, and after discovering them, with mature prudence to restrain and overrule them. . . . That tyrant himself, who has so often broken the laws, both divine and human, will himself teach you not to keep that which he, in his perfidy, has not kept. But already your tacit consent gives me to understand that my reasons have persuaded you that in this oration I ask not so much the salvation of my Republic, as the happiness, dignity, and increase of your own."

This speech moved the senators greatly, but did not settle the question, their minds being divided between alarm, sympathy, and prudence—fear of Philip on the one hand and of expense on the other—so that they resolved to hear Philip's ambassadors first before coming to any decision. Time was given to the orator of the Milan party to prepare his reply to Ridolfi, which he made in a speech full of bravado, declaring that he and his fellows were sent, not to make any league or peace

with Venice, since their former treaties were unviolated, and any renewal was unnecessary between such faithful allies, but simply to salute the Illustrious Signoria in Philip's name.

"But since these people, who have by nature the gift of speech, delicate and false, have not only to the Senate, but in the Piazza and by the streets, with pitiful lamentations, wept their fate, declaring that the war which they have carried on so badly was begun by Philip; he desires to leave it to your judgment, not refusing any conditions which you may prescribe. What they say is false and vain, unheard-of things, such as useless men, they are accustomed to study in order to abuse your gravity, your constancy, the ancient laws of friendship, and all the treaties made with Philip. They bid you fear him and the increase of his power. But you know that they are our enemies who speak. They tell you that kings hate the name of republica. . . . It is true that King Louis was a cruel enemy of the Venetian name, and all the house of Carrari were your enemies. But the Visconti, who for a hundred years have flourished in the noble duchy of Milan, were always friends of the Venetian Republic. . . . Philip has had good reasons to war against the Florentines, and so have all the Visconti. They ought to accuse themselves, their pride and avarice, not Philip who is the friend of peace and repose, the very model of liberality and courtesy. Let them therefore cease to abuse and injure our noble duke in your presence. Being provoked, we have answered in these few words, though we might have said many more; so true that they themselves (although they are liars) could not venture to contradict them."

This address did not throw much light upon the subject, and left the Senate in as much difficulty as if they had been an English Cabinet Council. There is much indeed in their position which, if our own could bear a laugh, would suggest

a parallel. "Diverse opinions and various decisions were agitated among the senators. Some declared that it was the best to oppose in open war the forces of Philip, who would otherwise deceive them with fair words until he had overcome the Florentines. Others said that to leap into such an undertaking would be mere temerity, adding that it was an easy thing to begin a war but difficult to end it." The Senate of Venice had, however, another leader at hand, whose eloquence was more convincing. When they had confused themselves with arguments for and against, the Doge, whose views were warlike, called for Carmagnola, who had been waiting in unaccustomed inaction to know what was to happen to him. All his wrongs had been revived by an attempt made to poison him in his retreat at Treviso by a Milanese exile who was sheltered there, and who hoped by this good deed to conciliate Philip and purchase his recall—a man who, like Carmagnola, had married a Visconti, and perhaps had some private family hatred to quicken his patriotic zeal. The attempt had been unsuccessful, and the would-be assassin had paid for it by his life. But the result had been to light into wilder flame than ever the fire of wrong in the fierce heart of the great captain, whose love had been turned into hatred by the ingratitude of his former masters and friends. He appeared before the wavering statesmen, who, between their ducats and their danger, could not come to any decision, flaming with wrath and energy. "Being of a haughty nature, *una natura sdegnoso*, he spoke bitterly against Philip and his ingratitude and perfidy," describing in hot words his own struggles and combats, the cities he had brought under Philip's

sway, and the fame he had procured him, so that his name was known not only throughout all Italy, but even through Europe, as the master of Genoa. The rewards which Carmagnola had received, he declared proudly, were not rewards, but his just hire and no more. And now *quell ingrato*, whom he had served so well, had not only wounded his heart and his good name, for the sake of a set of lying youths—*giovannetti dishonestissimi*—and forced him into exile, but finally had attempted to kill him. But yet he had not been without good fortune, in that he was preserved from this peril; and, though he had lost the country, in which he had left wife and children and much wealth, yet had he found another country where was justice, bounty, and every virtue—where every man got his due, and place and dignity were not given to villains! After this outburst of personal feeling, Carmagnola entered fully into the weightier parts of the matter, giving the eager senators to understand that Philip was not so strong as he seemed; that his money was exhausted, his citizens impoverished, his soldiers in arrears: that he himself, Carmagnola, had been the real cause of most of his triumphs; and that with his guidance and knowledge the Florentines themselves were stronger than Philip, the Venetians much stronger. He ended by declaring himself and all his powers at their service, and promising not only to "smash" Philip, but to increase the territory of the Venetians. Greater commanders they might have, and names more honoured, but none of better faith towards Venice, or of greater hatred towards the enemy.

Carmagnola's speech is not given in the first person like the others.

His tragic history was over, and the enthusiasm with which he was first received had become a thing to be lightly dwelt upon when the historian wrote; but it is easy to see the furious and strong personal feeling of the man, injured and longing for revenge, the heart torn with the serpent's tooth of ingratitude, the bitterness of love turned into hate. So strong was the impression made by these hoarse and thrilling accents of reality, that the doubters were moved to certainty, and almost all pronounced for the war. At the risk of overprolonging this report of the Venetian cabinet council and its proceedings, we are tempted to quote a portion of the speech of the Doge—such a speech as might have been addressed with much advantage to imperial councils nearer home. The Doge was Francesco Foscari, afterwards more sadly known to fame, but then newly elected and in the full fervour of popularity—a prince, says the chronicler, “beside his admirable wisdom in great and worthy undertakings, of great courage, *pron-tissimo*, and the natural enemy of all tyrants.” The insight, not without a touch of humour, of the opening of this address is very worthy of remark.

“There are two things in a republic, noble fathers, which by name and effect are sweet and gentle, but which are often the occasion of much trouble to the great and noble city—these are peace and economy. For there are dangers both distant and under our eyes, which either we do not see, or seeing them, being too much devoted to saving money, or to peace, esteem them little, so that almost always we are drawn into very evident peril before we will consider the appalling name of war, or come to manifest harm to avoid the odious name of expense. This fact, by which much harm and ruin has been done in our

times, and which has also been recorded for us by our predecessors, is now set before us in an example not less useful than clear in the misfortunes of the Florentines, who, when they saw the power of Philip increasing, might many times have restrained it, and had many occasions of so doing, but would not, in order to avoid the great expense. But now it has come to pass that the money which they acquired in peace and repose must be spent uselessly; and what is more to be lamented, they can neither attain peace save at the cost of their freedom, nor put an end to their expenditure. I say, then, that such dangers ought to be considered, and being considered, ought to be provided for by courage and counsel. To guide a republic is like guiding a ship at sea. I ask if any captain, the sea being quiet and the wind favourable, ceases to steer the ship, or gives himself up to sleep and repose without thinking of the dangers that may arise, without keeping in order the sails, the masts, the cordage, or taking into consideration the sudden changes to which the sea is subject, the season of the year, by what wind and in what part of the sea lies his course, what depth of water and what rocks she may encounter? If these precautions are neglected, and he is assailed by sudden misfortune, does he not deserve to lose his ship, and with it everything? A similar misfortune has happened to the Florentines, as it will happen to others who do not take precautions against dangers to the republic, and while they can, do not provide a rapid remedy. The Florentines (not to have recourse to another example) might have repressed and overcome the power of Philip when it was growing, if they had taken the trouble to use these opportunities. But by negligence, or rather by avarice, they refrained from doing so. And now it has come about that, beaten in war, with the loss of their forces, they are in danger of losing their liberty. And to make it worse, they are condemned everywhere, and instead of being called industrious are called vile, and held in good repute by none: instead of prudent are called fools; and instead of getting credit

for their wariness are esteemed to be without intelligence. These evils, therefore, ought to be provided against when far off, which when near can cause such serious evil."

Words so plain and honest, and which are so germane to the matter, come to us strangely from under the gilded roofs of the ducal palace, and from the midst of the romance and glory of the medieval Venice. But Venice was the nation of shopkeepers in those days which England is said to be now, and was subject to many of the same dangers which menace ourselves—though wrath was more prompt, and the balance of well-being swayed more swiftly, both towards downfall and recovery, than is possible in our larger concerns.

"The energetic speech and great influence of the Doge, which was greater than that of any prince before him," says the chronicler (alas! though this was that same Francesco Foscari who had to condemn his own son, and died in downfall and misery, deposed from his high place), settled the matter. The league was made with the Florentines, war declared against the Duke of Milan, and Carmagnola appointed general of their forces. The Senate sent messengers, we are told, through all Italy to seek recruits, but in the meantime set in movement those who were ready; while Carmagnola, like a valorous captain, began to contrive how he could begin the war with some great deed. It does not quite accord with our ideas that the first great deed which he planned was to secure the assassination of the Governor of Brescia and betrayal of that city, which is the account given by Sabellico; but Bigli relates the matter more fully, explaining that many in the city were inclined to

follow Carmagnola, who had once already conquered the town for Philip, who had always maintained their cause in Milan, and whose wrongs had thus doubly attracted their sympathy. He had, besides, something to offer them, which was more attractive than ordinary advantages—the liberties and citizenship of Venice, with a share in her honours, and the protection of her great name. The city was asleep, and all was still, when, with the aid from within of two brothers, *huomini di animo grandi*, the wall was breached, and Carmagnola got possession of Brescia. "It was about midnight, in the month of March, on the last day of Lent, which is sacred to St Benedict," when the Venetian troops marched into the apparently unsuspecting town. The scene is picturesque in the highest degree. They marched into the Piazza, the centre of all city life, in the chill and darkness of the spring night, and there, with sudden blare of trumpets and illumination of torches, proclaimed the sovereignty of Venice. It is easy to imagine the sudden panic, the frightened faces at the windows, the glare of the wild light that lit up the palace fronts and showed the dark mass of the great cathedral rising bleak and silent behind, while the horses pawed the ringing stones of the pavement and the armour shone. But the historian goes on to say: "Though at first dismayed by the clang of the trumpets and arms," the inhabitants, "as soon as they perceived that it was Carmagnola, remained quiet in their houses, except those who rushed forth to welcome the besiegers, or who had private relations with the general. No movement was made from the many fortified places in the city." The transfer from one suzerain to another was a matter of common

occurrence, which perhaps accounts for the ease and composure with which it was accomplished. This, however, was but a part of what had to be done. The citadel, which was high above on the crown of the hill which overlooks the city, was entirely uninfluenced by this sudden change of hands. Perhaps the Venetian trumpets and clang of the soldiery scarcely reached the airy ramparts above, or passed for some sudden broil, some encounter of enemies in the streets, such as were of nightly occurrence. The town was large, and rich, and populous upon the slopes underneath, surrounded with great walls descending to the plains—walls "thicker than they were high," with fortifications at every gate; and was divided into the old and new city, the first of these only being in Carmagnola's hands. It seems a doubtful advantage to have thus penetrated into the streets of a town while its surrounding fortifications and the citadel above were still in other hands; but the warfare of those times had other laws than those with which we are acquainted. The little use of the fortifications is devoutly explained by Bigli as a proof that God was against them—"because they were erected with almost unbearable expense and toil," "the very blood of the Brescians constrained by their former conqueror to accomplish this work, which was marvellous, no man at that time having seen the like." The Brescians themselves, he tells us, were always eager for change, and on the outlook for every kind of novelty, so that there was nothing remarkable in their quiet acceptance of, and even satisfaction in, the new sway. The "noble deed," however, was still almost all to do by which Carmagnola meant to begin the war. Leaving his namesake, Francesco

Gonzaga, to keep the city, he himself bestowed all his care and thought upon the reduction of the fortifications. The means he employed are a little difficult to follow, at least for a lay reader. He seems to have surrounded the castle with an elaborate double work of trenches and palisades, with wooden towers at intervals; and by the blockade in the first place, and assault in the second, reduced the citadel—a great feat of arms, to which not his genius alone, but also, as happens so constantly, the errors and weaknesses of his adversaries much assisted. While the siege thus went on there were marchings and countermarchings of the army, and many efforts made to draw Carmagnola's attention from his undertaking. In the middle of it he fell ill—"too much watching and fatigue of body having weakened his nerves," so that he was obliged to withdraw to the baths of Abano to recruit his strength. But finally his "noble deed" was accomplished, and the citadel and works of Brescia, along with all the strength of the city, fell into the hands of the Venetians, a great prize worthy the trouble and time which had been spent upon it—seven months after the first night attack, which was so easy.

This grave achievement accomplished, Carmagnola secured with little trouble the Brescian territory, most of the villages and castles in the neighbourhood, as far as the Lago di Garda, giving themselves up to the conqueror without waiting for any assault of arms. The tide of ill fortune seems to have been too much for Philip, and by the good offices of the Pope's legate a temporary peace was made—at the cost, to the Duke, of Brescia, with all its territory, the Valle Camonica, and all that part of

the Cremonese possessions which lay on the other bank of the Oglio, a district forty miles in extent. Philip, as may be supposed, was furious with his losses,—now accusing the faith of the Florentines, who had begun the war; now the avarice of the Venetians, who were not content with having taken Brescia, but would have Cremona too. The well-meant exertions of the legate, however, were of so little effect, that before his own departure he saw the magistrates sent by the Venetians to take possession of their new property on the Cremona side driven out with insults, and Philip ready to take arms again. The cause of this new courage was to be found in the action of the people of Milan, who, stung in their pride by the national downfall, drew their purse-strings, and came to their prince's aid, offering both men and money on condition that Philip would give up to them the dues of the city, so that they might reimburse themselves. Thus the wary and subtle Italian burghers combined daring with prudence, and secured a great municipal advantage, while undertaking a patriotic duty.

It would be hopeless to follow the course of this long-continued, often-interrupted war. On either side there was a crowd of captains—many Italians, men of high birth and great possessions, others sprung from the people like Carmagnola (a certain John the Englishman with a hundred followers swells his own train), all making a trade of war in a manner of which we can form little conception. The great battles which bulk so largely in writing, the names and number of which confuse the reader who attempts to follow the entanglements of alliances and treacheries which fill the chronicle, were in most cases almost bloodless, and

the prisoners who were taken by the victors were released immediately, "according to the usage of war," in order that they might live to fight another day, and so prolong and extend the profitable and not too laborious occupation of soldiering. This wonderful fact seems to have been first discovered by the Venetian Provveditori, or civil commissioners, who accompanied Carmagnola,—disagreeable spectators, such as every general dislikes,—whom the custom filled with consternation. Such, however, was the rule of these endless combats. The men-at-arms in their complete mail were very nearly invulnerable. They might roll off their horses and be stifled in their own helmets, or at close quarters an indiscreet axe might hew through the steel, or an arrow find a crevice in the armour; but such accidents were quite unusual, and the bloody battle was a sort of game which one general played against another, in ever renewed and changing combinations. The siege of Brescia, in the midst of all these factitious struggles, was a real and soldierly performance; and even the ordinary battle was in its way real enough, with no sham intention, though the danger attending it was small. But war was altogether a different matter from anything in modern days, perpetuating itself by well-understood means, no mutual feud being severe enough to overmaster the evident necessity under which each party lay of leaving the other party in freedom to continue the warfare. The danger that the different bands would quarrel among themselves, and divided counsels prevail, was perhaps greater than any other in the composition of these armies. In Philip's host, when the second campaign began, this evil was apparent. Half-a-dozen captains of

more or less equal pretensions claimed the command, and the wranglings of the counsel of war were not less than those of a village municipality. On the other hand, Carmagnola, in his rustic haughtiness, conscious of being the better yet the inferior of all round him, his *animo sdegnoso* stoutly contemptuous of all lesser claims, kept perfect harmony in his camp, though the names of Gonzaga and Sforza are to be found among his officers. Even the Venetian commissioners yielded to his influence, Bigli says, with awe—though he hid his iron hand in no glove, but ruled his army with the arrogance which had been his characteristic from his youth up.

The great battle of Macclodio or Macalo was the chief feature in Carmagnola's second campaign. This place was surrounded by marshes, the paths across which were tortuous and difficult to find, covered with treacherous herbage and tufts of wood. Carmagnola's purpose was to draw the Milanese army after him, and bring on a battle if possible on this impossible ground, which his own army had thoroughly explored and understood. Almost against hope his opponents fell into the snare, notwithstanding the opposition of the older and more experienced captains, who divined their old comrade's strategy. Unfortunately, however, for the Milanese, Philip had put a young Malatesta, incompetent and headstrong, whose chief recommendation was his noble blood, at the head of the old officers, by way of putting a stop to their rivalries. When the new general decided upon attacking the Venetians, his better instructed subordinates protested earnestly. "We overthrow Philip to-day," cried Torelli, one of the chiefs; "for either I know nothing of

war, or this road leads us headlong to destruction; but that no one may say I shrink from danger, I put my foot first into the snare." So saying, he led the way into the marsh, but with every precaution, pointing out to his men the traps laid for them, and having the good fortune to hit upon one of the solid lines of path, escaped with his son and a few of his immediate followers. Piccinino, another of the leaders, directed his men to turn their pikes against either friend or foe who stopped the way, and managed to cut his way out with a few of his men; but the bulk of the army fell headlong into the snare; the general Malatesta was taken almost immediately, and the floundering troops surrounded and taken prisoners in battalions.

Sabellico talks of much bloodshed, but it would seem to have been the innocent blood of horses that alone was shed in this great battle.

"Nearly five thousand horsemen, and a similar number of foot-soldiers, were taken—there was no slaughter," says Bigli; "the troops thus hemmed in, rather than be slain, yielded themselves prisoners. Those who were there affirm that they heard of no one being killed, extraordinary to relate, though it was a great battle. Philip's army was so completely equipped in armour, that no small blow was needed to injure them; nor is there any man who can record what could be called a slaughter of armed men in Italy, though the slaughter of horses was incredible. This disaster was great and memorable," he adds, "for Philip—so much so that even the conquerors regretted it, having compassion on the perilous position of so great a Duke; so that you could hear murmurings throughout the camp of the Venetians against their own victory."

Were it not that the bloodless character of the combat involves a certain ridicule, what a good thing

it would be, could we in our advanced civilisation carry on our warfare in this innocent way, and take each other prisoners with polite regret, only to let each other go to-morrow! Such a process would rob war of all fears; and if in certain eventualities it were understood that one party must accept defeat, how delightful to secure all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war at so easy a cost! There is indeed a great deal to be said in favour of this way of fighting.

This great success was, however, the beginning of Carmagnola's evil fortune. It is said that he might, had he followed up his victory, have pushed on to the walls of Milan and driven Philip from his duchy. But no doubt this would have been against the thrifty practices of the *condottieri*, and the usages of war. He returned to his headquarters after the fight without any pursuit, and all the prisoners were set free. This curious custom would seem to have been unknown to the Venetian commissioners, and struck them with astonishment. In the morning, after the din and commotion of the battle was over, they came open-mouthed to the general's tent with their complaint. The prisoners had in great part been discharged. Was Carmagnola aware of it? "What then," cried those lay critics, with much reason, "was the use of war? When all that was done was to prolong it endlessly—the fighting men escaping without a wound, the prisoners going back to their old quarters in peace?" Carmagnola, ever proud, would seem to have made them no reply; but when they were gone he sent to inquire what had been done with the prisoners, as if this unimportant detail was unknown to him. He was answered that almost all had been set free on the spot,

but that about four hundred still remained in the camp—their captors probably hoping for ransom. "Since their comrades have had so much good fortune," said Carmagnola, "by the kindness of my men, I desire that the others should be released by mine, according to the custom of war." Thus the haughty general proved how much regard he paid to the remonstrances of his civilian masters. "From this," says Sabellio, "there arose great suspicion in the minds of the Venetians. And there are many who believe that it was the chief occasion of his death." But no hint was given of these suspicions at the time; and as Carmagnola's bloodless victory deeply impressed the surrounding countries, brought all the smaller fortresses and castles to submission, and working with other misfortunes, brought Philip again with the ever-convenient legate to ask for peace, the general returned with glory to Venice, and was received apparently with honour and delight. But the little rift within the lute was never slow of appearing, and the jealous Signoria feted many a man whom they suspected, and for whom, under their smiles and plaudits, they were already concocting trouble. The curious "usage of war," thus discovered by the Venetian envoys, is frankly accounted for by a historian, who had himself been in his day a *condottiero*, as arising from the fear the soldiers had, if the war finished quickly, that the people might cry, "Soldiers, to the spade!"

A curious evidence of how human expedients are lost and come round into use again by means of that whirligig of time which makes so many revolutions, is to be found in Carmagnola's invention for the defence of his camp, of a double line of the country carts which

carried his provisions, arranged in line—with three archers, one authority says, to each. Notwithstanding what seems the very easy nature of his victories, and the large use of treachery, it is evident that his military genius impressed the imagination of his time above that of any of his competitors. He alone, harsh and haughty as he was, kept his forces in unity. His greatness silenced the feudal lords, who could not venture to combat it, and he had the art of command, which is a special gift.

The peace lasted for the long period of three years, during which time Carmagnola lived in great state and honour in Venice, in a palace near San Eustachio which had been bestowed upon him by the State.

His wife and children had in the former interval of peace been restored to him, and all seemed to go at his will. A modern biographer (Lomonaco), who does not cite any authorities, informs us that Carmagnola was never at home in his adopted city—that he felt suspicions and unfriendliness in the air—and that the keen consciousness of his low origin, which seems to have set a sharp note in his character, was here, and more than ever, felt. "He specially abhorred the literary coteries," says this doubtful authority, "calling them vain as women, punctilious as boys, lying and feigning like slaves," which things have been heard before, and are not worth putting into the fierce lips of the Piedmontese soldier, whose rough accent of the north was probably laughed at by the elegant Venetians, and to whom their constant pursuit of novelty, their mental activity, politics, and commotions of town life, were very likely nauseous and unprofitable. He who was conversant with more primitive

means of action than speeches in the Senate, or even the discussions of the Consiglio Maggiore, might well chafe at so much loss of time : and it was the fate of a general of mercenaries, who had little personal motive beyond his pay, and what he could gain by his services, to be distrusted by his masters.

The occasion of the third war is sufficiently difficult to discover. A Venetian cardinal—Gabriele Condulmero—had been made Pope, and had published a bull, admonishing both lords and people to keep the peace, as he intended himself to inquire into every rising, and regulate the affairs of Italy. This declaration alarmed Philip of Milan, to whom it seemed inevitable that a Venetian Pope should be his enemy ; and thus with no doubt a thousand secondary considerations on all hands, the peninsula was once more set on fire. The beginning of the war was not favourable to the Venetian arms, Carmagnola having been led by an imitation of his own tactics to defeat and loss before the stronghold of Soncino, where he is said to have lost a thousand—horses. The Venetian chronicler does not say that the prisoners on his own side were immediately liberated, as had been done on the other, but we must suppose that the custom of war held with both parties. The check, however, was soon forgotten in the real and great disaster which followed. The Venetians had fitted out not only the land army, but, what ought to have been more in consonance with their habits and character, an expedition by sea under the Admiral Trevisano, whose ships, besides their crews, are said to have carried 10,000 fighting men, for the capture of Cremona.

The fleet went up the Po to act

in concert with Carmagnola in his operations against that city. How it could be possible to manœuvre ships of war, as some of these galleys are expressly called, in the river, it would be vain for us to imagine. But Philip on his side had also a fleet in the Po, though inferior to the Venetian, under the command of a Genoese, Grimaldi, and manned in great part by Genoese, the hereditary opponents and rivals of Venice. The two generals on land, Sforza and Piccinino, then both in the service of Philip—men whose ingenuity and resource had been whetted by previous defeats, and who had thus learned Carmagnola's tactics—amused and occupied him by threatening his camp, which was as yet imperfectly defended, *piuttosto alloggiamento che ripari*: but in the night stole away, and under the walls of Cremona were received in darkness and silence into Grimaldi's ships, and flung themselves upon the Venetian fleet. These vessels being sea-going ships, were heavy and difficult to manage in the river—those of their adversaries being apparently of lighter build; and Grimaldi's vessels seem to have had the advantage of the current, which carried them "very swiftly" against the Venetians, who, in the doubtful dawn, were astonished by the sight of the glittering armour and banners bearing down upon them with all the impetus of the great stream. The Venetian admiral sent off a message to warn Carmagnola; but before he could reach the river-bank, the two fleets, in a disastrous jumble, had drifted out of reach. Carmagnola stood on the shore, hot with ineffectual haste, spending his wrath in shouts of encouragement to his comrades, and in cries of rage and dismay as he saw the tide of fortune drifting on, carrying the ships of Philip in

wild concussion against the hapless Venetians, the armour of the combatants gleaming, the trumpets blaring, the roars of falling masts and cordage adding to the confusion, out of which stood the high-poops, each a little castle, with its crown of armed men. When things became desperate, Trevisano, the admiral, got to shore in a little boat, and fled, carrying with him the treasure of 60,000 gold pieces, which was one of the great objects of the attack. But this was almost all that was saved from the rout. Bigli says that seventy ships were taken, of which twenty-eight were ships of war; but in this he is probably mistaken, as he had himself described the fleet as one of thirty ships. "The slaughter," he adds, "was greater than any that was ever known in Italy, more than 2500 men being said to have perished, in witness of which the Po ran red, a great stream of blood, for many miles." A few ships escaped by flight, and many fugitives, no doubt, in boats, and by the banks, where they were assailed by the peasants, who, taking advantage of their opportunity, and with many a wrong to revenge, killed a large number. Such a disastrous defeat had not happened to Venice for many a day.

The Venetian historian relates that Carmagnola received the warning and appeal of the admiral with contempt—"as he was of a wrathful nature, *di natura iracundo*, and with a loud voice reproved the error of the Venetians, who, despising his counsel, refused the support to the army on land which they had given to their naval expedition; nor did he believe what the messengers told him, but said scornfully that the admiral, fearing the form of an armed man, had dreamt that all the enemy in their boats were

born giants." This angry speech, no doubt, added to the keen dissatisfaction of the Venetians in knowing that their general remained inactive on the bank while their ships were thus knocked to pieces. The truth probably lies between the two narratives, as so often happens; for Carmagnola might easily express his hot impatience with the authorities who had refused to be guided by his experience, and with the admiral who took the first unexpected man in armour for a giant, when the messengers roused him with their note of alarm in the middle of the night, and yet have set himself in motion at once, though only to see the drifting of the grappled ships beyond his reach. He himself took the defeat so profoundly to heart, that the senators were compelled in the midst of their own trouble to send ambassadors to soothe him—"to mitigate his frenzy, that they might not fall into greater evil, and to keep him at his post." It is evident, we think, that the whole affair had been in direct opposition to his advice, and that instead of being in the wrong, he felt himself able to take a very high position with the ill-advised Signoria, and to resent the loss which must have been galling to him beyond measure, not only as a triumph of his immediate rivals, the Milanese captains, but as the cause of undoubted congratulation and satisfaction to Philip, his personal enemy. The Venetians avenged the disaster by sending a fleet at once to Genoa, where, coursing along the lovely line of the eastern Riviera, they caught in a somewhat similar way the Genoese fleet and annihilated it. But this is by the way.

Carmagnola all this time lay like Achilles sullen in his tent. Philip himself came in his joy and triumph

to the neighbourhood, but could not tempt the disgusted general to more than a languid passage of arms. An attempt to take Cremona by surprise made by one of his officers, a certain Cavalcabó, seemed as if it might have been crowned with success had the general bestirred himself with sufficient energy—"if Carmagnola had sent more troops in aid." As it was, the expedition, being unsupported, had to retire. "The taking of the city being thus out of thought, he sent all his people into winter quarters: for the great rains which had fallen during the autumn made the year a bad one for military movements." He lay thus sullen and disheartened in his leaguer even when spring restored the means of warfare, even though his old enemy Piccinino was up and stirring, picking up here and there a castle in the disturbed precincts of the Cremonese. "The marvel grew," cries Sabellico, "that Carmagnola let these people approach him, and never moved."

The Signoria, in the meantime, had been separately and silently turning over many thoughts in their mind on the subject of this general who was not as the others, who would not be commanded nor yet dismissed, too great to be dispensed with, too troublesome to manage. Ever since the memorable incidents of the battle of Maclodio, doubts of his good faith had been in their minds. Why did he liberate Philip's soldiers if he really wished to overthrow Philip? It was Philip himself—so the commissioners had said in their indignation—whom he had set free; and who could tell that of his own contriving, or that he had not stood aloof of set purpose while the ships

were cut in pieces? Besides, was it not certain that many a Venetian had been made to stand aside while this northern mountaineer, this rude Piedmontese, went swaggering through the streets holding the noblest at arm's-length? A hundred hidden vexations came up when some one at last introduced his name, and suddenly the senators with one consent burst into the long-deferred discussion for which every one was ready.

"There were not a few," says Sabbellico, "who from the beginning, had suspected Carmagnola. These now openly in the Senate declared that this suspicion not only had not ceased but increased, and was increasing every day; and that except his title of commander, they knew nothing in him that was not hostile to the Venetian name. The others would not believe this, nor consent to hold him in such suspicion until some manifest signs of his treachery were placed before them. The Senate again and again referred to the Avvogadori the question whether such a man ought to be retained in the public service, or whether, if convicted of treachery, he ought to be put to mortal punishment. This deliberation, which lasted a very long time, ought to demonstrate how secret were the proceedings of the Senate when the affairs of the country were in question, and how profound the good faith of the public counsellors. For when the Senate was called together for this object, entering into counsel at the first lighting of torches, the consultation lasted till it was full day. Carmagnola himself was in Venice for some time while it was proceeding; and going one morning to pay his respects to the Doge, he met him coming out of the council-chamber to the palace, and with much cheerfulness asked whether he ought to bid him good morning or good evening, seeing he had not slept since supper! To whom that prince replied smiling, that among the many serious matters which had been talked of in that long discussion, nothing had been oftener mentioned than his (Carmagnola's) name. But in order that no

suspicion might be awakened by these words, he immediately turned the conversation to other subjects. This was nearly eight months before there was any question of death; and so secret was this council, holding everything in firm and perpetual silence, that no conjecture or suspicion reached Carmagnola. And though many of the order of the senators were by long intimacy his friends, and many of them poor, who might have attained great rewards from Carmagnola had they betrayed this secret, nevertheless all kept it faithfully."

There is something grim and terrible in the smiling reply of the Doge to the man whose life was being played for between these secret judges, that his name had been one of those which came oftenest uppermost in their discussions. With what eyes must the splendid Venetian in his robes of state, pale with the night's watching, have looked at the soldier, erect and cheerful, *con fronte molto allegra*, who came across the great court to meet him in the first light of the morning, which after the dimness of the council-chamber and its dying torches would dazzle the watcher's eyes? The other red-robed figures, dispersing like so many ghosts pale-eyed before the day, did they glance at each other with looks of baleful meaning as the unsuspecting general passed with many salutations and friendly words and greetings—"Shall it be good even or good morrow, illustrious gentlemen, who watch for Venice while the rest of the world sleeps?" Would there be grace enough among the secret councillors to hurry their steps as they passed him, or was there a secret enjoyment in Foscari's *double entendre*—in that fatal smile with which he met the victim? The great Court which has witnessed so much has rarely seen a stranger scene.

It was some time after this, after the long, but, in the belief of the time, justifiable delay of the winter, that the Senate at last came to a decision in this question. That Carmagnola still lingered in camp doing little or nothing added a sort of exasperation to the impatience of the city, and gave their rulers a justification for what they were about to do. The Venetian senators had no thought of leaving their general free to carry over to Philip the help of his great name in case of another war. Carmagnola's sword thrown suddenly into the balance of power which was so critical in Italy, might have swayed it in almost any conceivable direction—and this was a risk not to be lightly encountered. Had he shaken the dust from his feet at Mestre, and, instead of embarking upon the lagoon, turned his horse round upon the beach, and galloped off as he had done from Philip's castle to some other camp—the Florentines', perhaps, or his own native Duke Amadeo of Savoy—what revolution might happen? He had done it once, but the magnificent Signoria were determined that he should not do it again. Therefore the blow must be sharp and sudden, allowing no time for thought. Thanks to that force of secrecy of which the historian brags, Carmagnola had no thought of any harm intended to him. He thought himself the master of the situation—he to whom only a year before the rulers of Venice had sent a deputation to soothe and caress their general, lest he should throw up his post. Accordingly, when he received the fatal message to return to Venice in order to give his good masters advice as to the peace, he was no more suspicious than Othello in the same circumstances might have been. He set

out at once, taking with him one of his lieutenants in war, Gonzaga, the lord of Mantua, and rode along the green Lombard plains in all the brilliancy of their spring verdure, received wherever he halted with honour and welcome. When he reached the Brenta he took boat; and his voyage down the slow-flowing stream, which has been always so dear to the Venetians, was like a royal progress. The Brenta was not then, as now, a long line of villas, in which, as in Goldoni's days, there was perpetual merrymaking. But yet the noble dwellers on the banks, "according to their habit," Sabellico says, received him as he passed, *con molto festa*. And so he went to his fate. At Mestre he was met by an escort of eight gentlemen from Venice—those, no doubt, to whom the historian refers as bound to him by long intimacy, who yet never breathed to him a word of warning. With this escort he crossed the lagoon, the towers and lofty roofs of Venice rising from out the rounded line of sea, his second home, the country of which he had boasted, where every man received his due.

How did they talk with him, those silken citizens who knew but would not by a look betray whither they were leading their noble friend? Would they tell him the news of the city, what was thought of the coming peace, what intrigues were afloat, where Trevisano, the unlucky admiral, had gone to hide his head in his banishment? or would the conversation flow on the last great public show, or some rare conceit in verse, or the fine fleet that followed the Bucentauro when last the Serenest Prince took the air upon the lagoon? But Carmagnola was not lettered, nor a courtier, so that such subjects would have little

charm for him. When the boats swept past San Stai, would not a waving scarf from some balcony show that his wife and young daughter had come out to see him pass, though well aware that the business of the Signoria went before any indulgence at home? Or perhaps he came not by Canereggio but up the Giudecca, with the wind and spray from the sea blowing in his face as he approached the center of Venetian life. He was led by his courtier-attendants to the palace direct—the senators having, as would seem, urgent need of his counsel. As he entered the fatal doors, those complacent friends, to save him any trouble, turned back and dismissed the retainers, without whom a gentleman never stirred abroad, informing them that their master had much to say to the Doge, and might be long detained.

Here romance comes in with unnecessary aggravations of the tragic tale, relating how, not finding the Doge, as he had expected, awaiting him, Carmagnola turned to go to his own house, but was stopped by his false friends, and led, on pretence of being shown the nearest exit, another gloomy way—a way that led through bewildering passages into the prisons. No sentimental Bridge of Sighs existed in these days. But when the door of the strong-room which was to be his home for the rest of his mortal life was opened, and the lively voices of his conductors sank in the shock of surprise and horror, and all that was about to be rushed on Carmagnola's mind, the situation is one which requires no aid of dramatic art. Here, in a moment betrayed out of the air and light, and the freedom which he had used so proudly, this man, who had never feared the face of men, must have realised his fate.

At the head of a great army one day, a friendless prisoner the next, well aware that the light of day would never clear up the proceedings against him, or common justice, such as awaits a poor picker and stealer, stand between him and the judges whose sentence was a foregone conclusion. Let us hope that those intimates who had accompanied him thus far slunk away in confusion and shame from the look of the captive. So much evil as Carmagnola had done in his life—and there is no reason to suppose, and not a word to make us believe, that he was a sanguinary conqueror, or abused the position he held—must have been well atoned by that first moment of enlightenment and despair.

During the thirty days that followed, little light is thrown upon Carmagnola's dungeon. He is swallowed up in the darkness, "examined by torture before the Secret Council," a phrase that chills one's blood—until they have the evidence they want, and full confirmation in the groans of the half-conscious sufferer of all imagined or concocted accusations. Sabellico asserts that the proof against him was "in letters which he could not deny were in his own hand, and by domestic testimony," whatever that may mean; and does not mention the torture. "The points of the accusation were these," he adds,—"succor refused to Trevisano, and Cremona saved to Philip by his treacherous abstinence." The fact, however, is more simply stated by Navagero before the trial, that "the Signoria were bent on freeing themselves" from a general who had apparently ceased to be always victorious, after the excellent habit of republics, which was to cut off the head of every unsuccessful leader—thus

effectually preventing further failure, on his part at least.

Carmagnola was not a man of words. Yet he might have launched with his dying breath some ringing defiance to catch the echoes, and leave in Venetian ears a recollection, a watchword of rebellion to come. The remorseless Council thought of this, with the vigilance and subtle genius which inspired all the proceedings of their secret conclave; and when the May morning dawned which was to be his last, a crowning indignity was added to his doom. He was led out *con uno sbadocchio in bocca*, gagged, "in order that he might not speak," to the Piazzetta, now so cheerful and so gay, which then had the most dreadful associations of any in Venice. "Between the columns," the blue lagoon, with all its wavelets flinging upward their countless gleams of reflection in the early sun; the rich-hued sails standing out against the blue; the great barges coming serenely in, as now, with all their many-coloured stores from the Lido farms and fields,—the gondolas crowding to the edge of the fatal pavement, the populace rushing from behind. No doubt the windows of the ducal palace, or so much of the galleries as were then in existence, were crowded with spectators too. Silent, carrying his head high, like him of whom Dante writes who held great Hell itself in despite—*sdegnoso* even of that gag between his lips—the great soldier, the general whose praises had rung through Venice, and whose haughty looks had been so familiar in the streets, was led forth to his death. By that strong argument of the axe, unanswerable, incontestible, the

Signoria managed to *liberarsi* of many an inconvenient servant and officer, either unsuccessful or too fortunate. Carmagnola had both of these faults. He was too great, and for once he had failed. The people called *Sventura! Sventura!* "Misfortune! Misfortune!" in their dark masses, as they struggled to see the wonderful sight. Their sympathies could scarcely be against the victim on that day of retribution; and perhaps had his voice been free to speak to them, might have thought of other things to shout, which the Signoria had been less content to hear.

Thus ended the great Carmagnola, the most famous of all Italian soldiers of fortune. Over one of the doors of the noble church of the Frari there has hung for generations a coffin covered with a pall, in which it was long supposed that his bones had been placed, suspended between heaven and earth *per infamia*, as a romantic Custode says. This, however, is one of the fables of tradition. He was buried in San Francisco delle Vigne (not the present church), whence at a later period his remains were transferred to Milan. His wife and daughter, or daughters, were banished to Treviso with a modest pension, yet a penalty of death registered against them should they break bonds—so determined, it is evident, were the Signora to leave no means by which the general could be avenged. And what became of these poor women is unknown. Such unconsidered trifles drop through the loopholes of history, which has nothing to do with hearts that are broken or hopes that cannot be renewed.

THE PICTURES OF RICHARD DOYLE.

AN inhabitant of Florence, in Dante's time, pointed out the poet as "the man who had been in hell." Richard Doyle might well enjoy the more pleasing designation of the man who had been in Elfland. He spent much of his time there, and has brought away a great deal of information about the manners and customs of its inhabitants. Excepting Mr Lemuel Gulliver, nobody has been keener in observing and describing the features of a strange country and state of society. These we find recorded in many of Doyle's delightful sketches and pictures, of which, from our recollections of them at the present and other exhibitions and elsewhere, we shall endeavour to give a chronicle and brief abstract.

In the first place, he amply confirms the common notion that fairies, spirits, elves, and goblins are not troubled with a pressing sense of the responsibilities of existence, but take life in a desultory, devil-may-care sort of fashion. Nothing like settled business casts its shadow over them. None of them appears ever to have kept a shop or a counting-house, or to have contributed in the least degree to the cultivation of the soil. The utilitarian doctrines not only do not prevail, but do not exist among them. Their state affairs are entirely ceremonial. They never had a legislative assembly, though the waste of time, idle talk, foolish jest, and absence of common-sense, which prevail in such places, would not be foreign to their habits. Trades must have existed among them, since they are generally (though not always) clothed, the upper classes in robes,

and the multitude in the fashions preserved since Elizabeth's time—doublets, tight hose, short cloaks, pointed caps, and long-toed shoes. Weavers, men's tailors and women's tailors, shoemakers, &c., must therefore have existed somewhere, possibly as slaves immured in workshops. But as the whole population was always ready to swarm forth at a moment's notice, for sport or mischief, as if bank holiday were perpetual, their occupations could never have been of an exacting kind. Thus (we learn) a venturesome equestrian having come on a party of them revelling on the sea-shore, and snatched up one of their goblets, all Elfland, male and female, old and young, is represented as in pursuit of the marauder. The only sprite (according to Doyle) that has ever evinced a steady purpose, is one clad in white, who makes it her business to haunt a particular bridge, and allows no one to cross who does not kneel to her. Forming the only bright spot in the picture, except her own reflection in the water, she sits in the midst of an admirably painted piece of woodland which frames an arched passage for the course of the stream. This sprite has evidently suffered some great wrong, most likely from a male sprite, leading her to follow the example of the misanthrope mentioned by Mr Weller, who "kept a 'pike and rewenged himself on society by taking tolls." But in general they seem to have no object beyond the impulse of the moment. Thus a fairy encountering an owl, on turf or in tree, is impelled to fondle the solemn bird, who, as might be expected from his imperturbable

character, merely tolerates the familiarity without any kind of response. In some of these pictorial records, whole rows of elves are seated, each beside his or her owl. But this infatuation for owls is evidently of the most transient nature, and would be dissolved instantly on the opportunity of some other diversion, such as a race or a gallop. For this purpose they will mount a flock of small birds, or bound on the backs of the inhabitants of a rabbit-warren, and launch forth on a wild and reckless career. The rabbit, though very delightful to sit upon—his downy back being more comfortable, especially to the unclad, than the best saddle that ever came out of Piccadilly, and his ears pleasanter to the grasp than either snaffle or curb-rein—is yet an uncertain kind of steed, as the many mishaps shown in the course of a run testify; while his habit of disappearing suddenly in a hole is such as the first equestrians can hardly be expected to contend against. Sometimes a troop on the ramble will vault on the backs of a flock of geese, and urge them with outstretched necks and striding webs across the common; but even a goose will turn when rode upon, and a dismounted jockey is being severely pecked by his feathered courser. The back of the lowly beetle pursuing his deliberate way to a point a few yards off, where he may possibly arrive in the course of the night, is not disdained by the elf disposed for equestrian exercises. But the most poetical of all the coursers bestridden by elf or fairy is the bat. A whole company thus mounted are rising into the air from the banks of a reedy lake. No less than four pictures represent Ariel, the prince of elves, as borne thus in solitary wavering flight through

the sky. Now he is going aloft in the light of the high full moon, only his face, that of a chubby child, seen over the head of the bat round whose neck his arms are thrown. Anon he is seated gracefully upright, clasping his knees between the brown pinions, himself equipped with short wings like those of a pretty moth, and evidently on confidential terms with his steed, who turns his head upward towards the rider; and in this drawing only, the crescent moon is seen with admirable effect through the elaborate pattern of the bat's leathern wing, while two stars struggle through the dim blue vapour of the air. Again we see him seated with his face to the bat's tail, soaring in a higher, calmer region, no stars above nor landscape below. Lastly, led into forgetfulness of time by the fascinating nature of his excursion, he is surprised by the red streaks of dawn, as they stretch between the dim earth and the awakening sky, tipping with crimson the rocks that bound the small estuary over which he happens to be flying. Why Ariel, who could go swift as an arrow from a Tartar's bow, should have found diversion in so slow a conveyance as the winged mouse, we cannot account for otherwise than by supposing that while pegged in the entrails of the cloven pine from which Prospero released him, he naturally became acquainted with his fellow-tenants who would be hanging by the heels in that retreat, and formed with them a lifelong friendship, doing equal credit to his head and heart.

The tenants of fairyland seem sometimes to have experienced an impulse towards benevolence or usefulness; but it was probably accidental, and only the result of a desire to amuse themselves.

Thus a musical fairy is giving a singing lesson to a number of small birds, but happily without having induced them to abandon their natural notes. And two pictures commemorate a practice of the fairies of combing and dressing the goats' beards on Saturday night, to make them smart for Sunday. The ceremony, or assignation, takes place on a hillside—partly bright with sunset, partly darkened with the shadow of approaching night. The sylph beauties—possessing, let us hope, only an imperfect sense of smell—devote themselves with a will to their task,—combing, twining, and plaiting the tufted chins; while the billy-goats submit with good grace to the fascinating barbers, except one restive capricorn who gallops away, and another that from behind a rock peeps furtively at his hairdresser, who beckons him with cajoling finger. This subject (as we told the artist) ought to have been treated by Herkomer. However, as a rule, they make no pretence to benevolence, but rather the contrary. Thus a number of them, as if the agents of an Imperial Chancellor, are egging on two frogs to fight, by taunts and suggestions of good grounds for quarrel, as wounded honour and so forth. Another mocks and gibes at a large toad, whose profoundly meditative and sedentary aspect precludes all idea of possible provocation. For some reason the lesser amphibia are not esteemed in elfland, and when not objects of hostility are exposed to practical jokes. No elf can pass a frog without jeering at him, or, if coming on him from behind, using him for the purpose of giving a back—a practice which explains the name of a popular game. The cause of this ill-feeling is to be found in one of the largest pictures,

the "Battle of Elves and Frogs." At some remote, even prehistoric, period, a *casus belli* arose between the two peoples; perhaps a frog ambassador had been disrespectful to Oberon—or the elves may have wished to establish a stable government in some distant and populous swamp; anyhow, war alone could decide the matter. The elves took up a strong position on a rising ground, at the foot of which was a natural moat, in the shape of a reedy pond. And here we see how the rules of war are subject to change under novel circumstances. In ordinary cases a bridge would have been necessary in order to approach the position. But the gallant frogs, flinging themselves boldly into one of their native elements, have crossed the obstacle and scaled the heights. Some of the most forward spirits of the amphibious army have forced their way up to the very mound where the elf-king and leader has stationed himself, like Harold at Hastings, and have even turned his flank. But the sprites, in loose formation, have met the enemy, some of whom, their retreat accelerated by panic, are already describing wonderful parabolas in the air on their way to the pond. In the centre of the picture, a speckled champion is receiving full in his yellow stomach the thrust of a spear of grass. A frog's countenance would not seem to lend itself to much play of feature, but his is not inexpressive of anguish. As in a medieval battle, prisoners are led away on both sides. The captive frogs were apparently held to ransom, but the goblins are placed *hors de combat* by being dropped into the pond. The frog general is slyly represented as keeping well out of the battle on the opposite shore, attended by an obsequious staff. No doubt the

elves prevailed ; for, as we have seen, they have treated the frogs ever since as a subject people. Most likely Mr Doyle found the narrative of this celebrated action, which he calls the sixteenth decisive battle of the world, in some ancient fairy chronicle, or perhaps woven in goblin tapestry, and hung on the walls of a palace in that strange country.

In much later times the elves met in battle a far more formidable enemy, the Crows,—not the Indian tribe of that name, but the predatory race against whom we ourselves wage war, chiefly with scarecrows—a kind of troop possessing but little manœuvring power, and from whom Mr Childers probably took his idea of short-service soldiers. The elves, as before, took up a strong position on a knoll crowned with an ancient tower ; but against an enemy who descends from the air, advantages of ground do not count for much. The battle is very desperate ; when elf meets crow, then comes the tug of war. Many elves are prostrate, and are being violently pecked ; one has his pointed cap torn from his head—which is probably held as equivalent to taking his scalp. On the other hand, crows have fallen, and one in the distance is coming to earth transfixed by a goblin's arrow. Only the advanced-guard of the crows is engaged ; their supports are formed on a neighbouring group of leafless trees, while the battalions of reserve are coming up in such numbers as to darken the sky. If the commander of the rooks is not a mere vain babbler, cawing for ever in his own glorification, but an able tactician, he has evidently great chances open to him. The landscape of this picture is one of the best that Doyle ever painted ; the evening sky darkened by the

cloud of birds, the trees in the inundated meadow, the ancient tower, are all of high order, and produce a most harmonious evening effect.

It has long been known that the government of fairyland is in form monarchical. The consort of the fairy king is treated with high respect, and, next to war, the most serious business of her subjects is the manifestation of respect and loyalty for her person. This takes a form quite different from our municipal addresses and deputations. In a small picture the elf-queen is seen seated in the moonlight on a tall mushroom, while around her, wheel in an informal dance her courtier-circle, each footing it according to his own notion of a step—an improved form of demonstration which we recommend to the consideration of the Lord Mayor and Common Council. The court seems to be constituted mainly on the principles of those of Europe, except that many of the courtiers are without clothes ; there are young maids-of-honour, equerries, &c., descended, no doubt, from the ancient families of Cobweb, Peas-blossom, and Mustard-seed ; while greybeard officers of state are not wanting, figuring as Masters of the Ceremonies and old Sticks-in-Waiting. The whole circle are apt to flow forth in strange revelry, following some sudden impulse. Mr Doyle, while drawing a woodland dell in his best manner, once saw the whole court threading their way like a stream of coloured light under the broad leaves of the water-plants that grew on the margin of a pool, where they had disturbed, but not alarmed, a solitary kingfisher. And again, in sportive moments, they have disguised themselves in Watteau-like costumes, and, bewigged and behooped, enacted, under the

ancient trees of parks and lawns, the revels of long-departed owners and their guests.

It is apparently the fairy queen's gracious habit to sleep in any suitable spot surrounded with her court. We find her thus reposing on the rocky shore of a mountain-tarn. The moonlight is painted in this picture with remarkable effect; and we thus learn that fairies do not always spend the night in roaming, which may be one reason why they are not to be seen any or every night, but sometimes prefer to sleep beneath the chaste beams of the watery moon. The fairy king seems to entertain unsocial and unconnubial views on the subject of repose; for we find him, betwixt afternoon and evening, asleep by himself under a hollow bank amid the roots of a tree, while overhead float slowly, guarding his slumbers, the lords and ladies of the bedchamber. After the lapse of so many ages since the time of the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' the queen seems still occasionally to add to the legitimate succession; for we find her in one pretty scene nursing an elf-baby, with her crown on, while a blue-clad fairy, possibly an elder sister, helps to tend and fondle the royal infant.

No living naturalist knows so much about dragons as Doyle. Next to fairies, he has studied them more than any other province of animated nature. For the most part they have been hostile to man, to the extent of habitual dining on human virgins; and many knights since St George have sought to win fame, and the favour of the rescued maidens, by defying them to single combat. Our artist shows us, not the combat itself, which has perhaps been so often treated by medieval painters as to be incapable of fresh presentation,

but the preface and the last scene. Thus the historic dragon of Wantley, roused by the loud challenge of the champion who defies him from the summit of the rock, is issuing from his craggy lair with an aspect suggestive of irritated feeling and bad language, which reminds us of the felonious inmate of a London slum once visited by Dickens, who looked out of the window angrily demanding, "What the adjective substantive do you want here?" The end of the combat, under the title of "The Return of the Dragon-slayer," is a favourite subject with Doyle, who evidently commemorates several distinct events of this kind—for whereas in one the dragon slain is dragged by the tail, in others he is led in captive by his conqueror (in one case with the knight's pocket-handkerchief tied over the dragon's eye, injured in the conflict); and in a drawing which we remember as exhibited a few years ago, the reptile's longitude was such that, although he extended along an entire street, his tail was still round the corner. But in all cases the knight carcoles proudly through the town, amidst the applause of the populace and the greetings of civic functionary, dame, and demoiselle—everybody admiring and congratulating, except another knight who preserves a lofty and disdainful aspect, to show how lightly a warrior of his prowess esteems such feats. The dragon was not always, however, the enemy of man; he had his softer moments, as when he is seen playing chess with a princess, and could even make himself useful. It is well known that the christening of earthly princes and princesses is frequently attended by powerful fairies, their godmothers, who bestow on them various excellences of mind and person, though with what result in

after-life has never been quite clear. One of these generous sponsors is depicted as coming forth from the palace after the ceremony, to return to her own dominions; and, for conveyance, at the door is waiting her dragon, who has of necessity been kept in the street during the visit, as no building shorter than the Thames tunnel could have stabled an animal of his extent. This dragon is submitting to be held by a smart goblin-groom whom he could have swallowed like an oyster, and is good-humoredly unconscious that some street-boys, distant a few minutes' walk, are taking liberties with his tail.

Incidentally we learn from Doyle a good deal about the personal attributes of dragons. We perceive that as there are one-humped and two-humped camels, and one-horned and two-horned rhinoceroses, so there are one-headed and two-headed dragons. One groom, however, suffices to hold a two-headed dragon, used for draught or riding, as he might suffice for a pair of horses. Besides the teeth and claws, the spiky wings, shaped on the principle of holly-leaves, would cause considerable annoyance to an antagonist if vigorously flapped about his head; and further, the end of the tail is furnished with an arrow-head sting, which, if time permits, can be brought up and buried in the body of the foe. Also the dragon's eyes burn and his breath smokes, as if from an internal furnace; so that the knight who would tackle him would find, altogether, a very ugly customer. We see also that the tradition expressed in the tavern sign of the Green Dragon is a true one—the creature's coat-of-mail is of the sheen of the ivy-leaf; and though Campbell tells us how War "yoked the red dragons of her iron car," we may, on Doyle's authority, safely

affirm of the dragon's colour, as of the chameleon's, "'Tis green—'tis green, sir, I assure ye."

One of the most curious and unexpected facts of dragon-life which our artist has brought to light is that respecting the young brood. Having supposed them to be rare animals, we were surprised to find them existing in flocks, hatched apparently from eggs, and used as a kind of farm-stock. Several representations show us witches driving young dragons to market. Who the purchasers can be of these strange articles of commerce we cannot divine—perhaps they are bought up by dealers who, after breaking them to harness or saddle, sell them to rich fairies. In one case the sorceress, young and not ungraceful, and clad in diaphanous drapery, is descending a mountain side in misty moonlight; in another, an old witch, of the kind that Macbeth knew of, is driving with outstretched broom her singular poultry along the shore of a lake, on the margin of which stands a ruined monastery. In all cases the character of the flock is much the same: though quite newly hatched—for they are no bigger than turkeys—there is plenty of latent truculence to be developed with maturity; they show the fire of the race glowing in eye and nostril, and are extremely troublesome to drive.

It was pleasant to see last year, at the Institute in Piccadilly, an indication that an artist, Mr Fitzgerald, existed among us capable of carrying on the traditions of Doyle. He had chosen for his subject a hare just escaped from the hounds, and resting within a screen of grass and brambles. In the distance the hunters and the pack are seen jogging homeward against the evening sky. Round the fugitive are drawing the pitying fairy population of the district. A sylph, splendidly

clad, is floating towards her, expressing as plainly as looks may, "Poor dear!" while another in white raiment pats her panting breast. Two sprites that have woven a necklace of grass are putting it round the hare's neck; two more are bringing her red berries, as a slight refreshment after her exertions—the one presenting the offering on a leaf-platter, the other on the point of a thorn. An elf in scarlet, seated easily, though it might be thought uncomfortably, on the stem of a bramble, is watching the hunters, evidently in order to give notice if they should return. And besides these, the grass and stems are populous with quaint forms, half sprite, half insect, who have no particular concern in the hare, but have been disturbed by the commotion, as a swarm of flies by an approaching step. This drawing, beautifully executed, is the more welcome as showing the race to be actuated by the novel impulse of benevolence.

When not employed in his more serious and important function of showing us what goes on in fairy and dragon circles, Mr Doyle could relax into representations of our own scenery. He could show us the leafy recesses of a dell in Devonshire, or the stately towers of a baronial castle in the North. One of his best landscapes represents the park and seat of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, which, contrary to what might be anticipated respecting the surroundings of that apostle of temperance, contains no water, but is full of spirit. On the verge of the crowded tombstones of Halloworth churchyard, he has placed the dreary parsonage where the Brontës lived their intense imaginative lives—the picture being perhaps his reply to the question, "Tell me, where is Fancy bred?"

In early days he gave us the many comic outlines of daily life which adorned 'Punch,' and the grotesque illustrations of our national history which he describes as rejected in the competition for decorating the walls of Westminster. But his real business lay with the scenery of that pleasant moonlit land where Oberon ruled in the days of Duke Theseus and Bully Bottom, and which in more recent times had been illustrated by the French fairy chroniclers, Perrault and Madame d'Aulnois.

A superficial observer would never have guessed from Mr Doyle's aspect that he was connected intimately with the inhabitants of fairyland or painter-in-ordinary to its royal family. Goodly of stature, he was also substantial of person, and could not be thought of for a moment as one who could join in racing on rabbits, leaping over toadstools, riding on bats, or floating about clothed in glorified cobwebs; nor, on the other hand, was he of a temper to challenge dragons to combat. Kind and pleasant of discourse, gentle of voice, courteous of bearing, his value as a companion was very widely recognised, and his society was much coveted by the Titanias of Mayfair and Belgravia. His agreeable humor was by no means restricted to his pictures: he was quaint in speech as in art; and his way of showing that something uttered had amused him—by retiring into his cravat, in the recesses of which a soft smothered laugh would be heard, and then emerging to cap the jest—was special to himself. For the many who appreciated him, some of the brightness and grace which spread a wholesome illusion over common life died out of the world last year with Richard Doyle.

AN ANGLER'S GARLAND.

THE ANGLER'S APRIL.

"Now is the time
While yet the dark-brown water aids the gulls,
To tempt the Trout. The well-dissembled fly,
The rod fine-tapering with elastic spring,
Snatched from the hoary steed the floating line,
And all thy slender watery stores prepare."

—THOMSON · *The Seasons—Spring.*

1.

APRIL dawns.—Sweet month, when doves
Tune their notes to wooing ;
Filling primrose vales and groves
With soft vernal cooing.

2.

Month which, Keble hints, is sad
— In the flowery places :—
Month, to anglers, "gay and glad,"
Rich in troutful graces !

3.

Month which clears the torrent burn
From its tincture muddy,
And, with smiles, beholds it turn
Into amber ruddy.

4.

Month which draws the witch-wand out ;
That unvanquished timber,
Curbing lustiest of trout,
With tops stiff and limber :

5.

Curvilinear of play,
Tough, elastic, slender :
Runic staff, of many a day
Scored with records tender.*

* "Well may I guess and feel
Why autumn should be sad ;
But vernal airs should sorrow heal,
Spring should be gay and glad :
Yet as along this violet bank I rove,
The languid sweetness seems to choke my breath,
I sit me down beside the hazel grove,
And sigh, and half could wish my weariness were death."
—'The Christian Year:' *Third Sunday after Easter.*

* "I have his rod still, and a sterling piece of wood hath it been. . . . There are notches on't, along its butt, denoting the length of great fish mastered by the skill of its first possessor."—Stoddart, 'Angling Reminiscences,' p. 167.

"The butt of my rod being a measure."—Sir H. Davy, 'Salmonia,' p. 35.

6.

Month which opens parchment books,
All illuminated
With bright rainbow-feathered hooks,
To clear silk-worm mated :

7.

Month which thoughtfully reviews
Hoarded stores of tackle :
Then, with gentle hand, renews
Splice, and knot, and hackle :

8.

Next, the gossamer-like line
Ties, and straight delivers ;
Crying,—“ *Fish, far off, and fine,¹*
Rippling lakes and rivers.”

9.

Scans the magic winch and wheel
With approving glances :—
(Gay goes “music of the reel,”
When a salmon dances !)

10.

Bids us well and truly try
Landing-net and basket,
Made, by “heavenly alchymy,”²
Golden mesh and casket.

11.

Calls us early ; sends us forth,—
Us, whose “name is Legion,”—
West, and East, and South, and North,
O'er each watered region.

12.

Paints the mountain meres and streams
With an angler's rapture ;—
Lakes, transfigured as in dreams,
Fish, that thirst for capture.

13.

Bless the showers ambrosial ;
Bless the zephyrs blowing ;
When our flies like manna fall,
Light as summer's snowing !

¹ “To fish fine, and far off, is the first and principal rule for Trout Angling.”—‘The Compleat Angler,’ Part II. Chap. v.

² “Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchymy.”

—SHAKESPEARE : Sonnet xxxiii.

14.

Forthwith be our blissful fate
 Lovingly to cozen
 "Fario" by hundredweight,
 "Ferox" by the dozen.

15.

Where "the great old subtil Trout"
 Lurks, profound and "fearful,"
 Ply the lure, and bring him out
 To the daylight cheerful.

16.

Draw the finny might he vaunts,
 Tricked with hues enamelled,
 From their deepest, hidden haunts,
 Artfully entrammelled.

17.

Gorgeous sides, in sooth, he hath :
 Jewelled neck and shoulder :
 His insignia of The Bath
 Dazzle the beholder.

18.

Diplomatically played,
 Netted, landed wisely,
 See ! he turns, when duly weighed,—
 Seven pounds precisely !

19.

Should some lordly salmon lunge
 At the phantom airy,
 Give him butt, and let him plunge ;
 Watch his cantrips wary :

20.

How, in brave "effeir of weir,"
 O'er the pools he dashes !
 How he scatters, far and near,
 Foam in silver flashes !

21.

Steer and turn his headstrong course :
 Change his views erratic :
 And, with latent, suasive force,
 Rule his sports aquatic.

¹ "For you are to note, that the great old Trout is both subtil and fearful, and does not usually stir out of his hold, but lies in it as close in the day, as the timorous hare does in her form."—'The Compleat Angler,' Chap. v.

² "He bees a gorgeous tyke."—Billy Balmer, *apud* Stoddart ; see 'An Angler's Rambles,' p. 233.

³ "Effeir of weir"—array of war.

22.

Reel him up with nimble sleight,—
Coruscating, splendid :—
Soon that notable sea-fight
Shall be nobly ended.

23.

Lead him to yon shelving strand :
Gaff him well and featly :
Then, on flower-bespangled land,
Let him slumber sweetly.

24.

How, like unrequited Love,
There he lies "a-bleeding" !—
(Crown's quest doth quickly prove :—
" *Choked from over-feeding.*")

25.

Never more through lucid deeps
Shall he glide or flounder :
Though his scutcheon tells that,—"*Sleeps
Here, a Thirty-pounder.*"

26.

Where the wild-thyme purplest blows,
High o'er margin sedgy,
Where the purest Aqua flows,
Drink that hero's "dredgie."¹

27.

Isis, crown thy "Double-First" :
Cam, thy "Senior Wrangler" :—
Highland Aqua, slake the thirst
Of a "Senior Angler."

28.

"PAX VOBISCUM," rod, line, flies,
Full of grace and favour !—
"ET CUM SPIRITU,"—replies
One who prees peat-flavour !

J. P. M.

¹ "Dredgie"—dirige, dirge. From an antiphon in the ancient Office for the Dead, which began : "*Dirige, Dominus meus, in conspectu tuo vitam meam.*"—Psalm v. 8.

THE ANGLER'S WISH.

"I IN these flowery meads would be :
These chrystal streams should solace me :
To whose harmonious bubbling noise
I with my angle would rejoice,
 Sit here, and see the turtle-dove
 Courte his chaste mate to acts of love.

"Or on that bank, feel the west wind
Breathe health and plenty, please my mind,
To see sweet dew-drops kiss those flowers,
And then, wash'd off by April showers :
 Here, hear my Kenna sing a song,
 There, see a blackbird feed her young.

"Or a leverock build her nest ;
Here give my weary spirits rest ;
And raise my low-pitched thoughts above
Earth, or what poor mortals love :
 Thus free from law-suits, and the noise
 Of princes' courts, I would rejoice ;

"Or, with my Bryan, and a book,
Loiter long days near Shawford brook ;
There sit by him, and eat my meat,
There see the sun both rise and set :
 There bid good morning to next day,
 There meditate my time away :
And angle on, and beg to have
A quiet passage to a welcome grave."

ISAAC WALTON.

WALTONI VOTUM.

His equidem vivam florentibus incola pratis :
Flumina et hæc vitro lucidiora colam :
Quâ strepitent amnes errantes, devius errem,
Piscator virgâ lætus arundineâ :
Quâque tui casti spectentur, turtur, amores,
Qualia et accipias præmia, fidus avie.

Lentus et assideam muscoso in margine rivi,
Spirat ubi Zephyris intemerata salus :
Osculaque adspiciam florum qui rore madescunt,
Vel pluviis quales dulcis Aprilis habet :
Seu fundis modulos tu, lux mea, Kenna, propinquos,
Seu merulam video quæ sua nata fovet :

Aut ubi nidificans agris operatur alauda,
Sollicitam mentem subrepat alta quies :
Tunc animo subeant jucunda oblivia vitæ,
Immemor et terræ, sidera quærat Amor.
Este procul, lites ; regum procul este tumultus ;
Sit mihi lætificæ Pacis adesse comes.

Scilicet adveniant Bryanus, parvusque libellus,
Murmura quâ resonent desilientis aquæ :
Gratus erit conviva mihi : liceatque tueri
Occiduum solem, luciferumque polum.
Crastinus, ut rapido Phæbo salvere juvabit,
Inveniam solidum præterisse diem.
Sic mihi Dî dederint piscando fallere vitam :
Sic vitam solvat Mortis amica manus !

J. P. M.

SONG :

FROM 'THE COMPLEAT ANGLER.'

"OH, the gallant fisher's life,
It is the best of any ;
'Tis full of pleasure, void of strife,
And 'tis beloved by many :
Other joys
Are but toys,
Only this
Lawful is,
For our skill
Breeds no ill,
But content and pleasure.

"In a morning up we rise,
Ere Aurora's peeping,
Drink a cup to wash our eyes,
Leave the sluggard sleeping :
Then we go
To and fro,
With our knacks
At our backs,
To such streams
As the Thames,
If we have the leisure.

"When we please to walk abroad
For our recreation,
In the fields is our abode,
Full of delectation :
Where in a brook,
With a hook,
Or a lake,
Fish we take,
There we sit
For a bit,
Till we fish entangle.

"We have gentles in a horn,
We have paste and worms too;
We can watch both night and morn,
Suffer rain and storms too ;

GENEROSI piscatoris
Præstat vita clara,
Plena pacis et amoris,
Pluribusque cara :
Nam mundana
Cuncta vana
Sunt : hoc solum
Vitat dolum ;
Neque nocet,
Neque docet
Nisi charitates.

Mane surgimus : spectamus
Solem orientem :
Visum poculis lavamus,—
Mitte dormientem !
Mox deinde,
Hinc et inde,
Rebus aptis
Dorso captis,
Properamus
Ubi Tamus
Recreat æstates.

Cum interdum nobis placet
Rura peragraré,
Domus, ecce ! campis jacet,
Nata delectare :
Rivis ibi
Quisque sibi,
Sive lacu,
Hami acu
Pisces capit,
Et, (si sapit !)
Sedet otiose.

Nobis sunt in cornu, sane,
Muscæ, gluten, vermes ;
Vigilamus noctu, mane,
Fortes, nec inermes :

None do here
 Use to swear ;
 Oaths do fray
 Fish away :
 We sit still
 And watch our quill ;
 Fishers must not wrangle.

" If the sun's excessive heat
 Make our bodies swelter,
 To an ozier hedge we get
 For a friendly shelter,
 Where in a dike
 Pearch or Pike,
 Roach or Dace,
 We do chase,
 Bleak or Gudgeon
 Without grudging,
 We are still contented.

" Or we sometimes pass an hour
 Under a green willow
 That defends us from a shower,
 Making earth our pillow,
 Where we may
 Think and pray
 Before death
 Stops our breath :
 Other joys
 Are but toys,
 And to be lamented."

JO. CHALKHILL.

Nec sint rixæ
 Hic enixæ ;
 Pellunt, metu,
 Pisces, cœtu ;
 Nos sedemus,
 Et videmus
 Linum, curiose.

Forte si per solis ictum
 Venerint sudores,
 Infra gelidum salictum
 Fugimus calores :
 Ibi multi
 Pisces stulti
 Sunt venandi,
 Et captandi :
 Præda talis
 Fluvialis
 Ut est invidenda !

Cabat imber, hospitem
 Umbram indagamur
 Sylvæ viridis, ad qualem
 Solo reclinamur :
 Cogitantes
 Et orantes :—
 " Cum sit vita
 Brevis, cita
 Mors sit, vana
 Sunt mundana,
 Prorsusque mœrenda."

J. P. M.

THE WATERS OF HERCULES.—PART IX.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—A MODERN MARTYR.

"Wenn dud en steilen Berg ersteiget
Wirst du beträchtlich ächzen."

—HEINZ.

LIKE a fire which has smouldered so low as to have almost reached extinction, and of a sudden leaps into new flame, so did the half-forgotten robber-panic reawaken with ten-fold strength, when one evening it became known that the Bohemian's milk-girl had been assaulted.

A man had burst through the bushes, while she was alone on the pathway; had first torn the coin-necklace from her throat, and flung it contemptuously to the ground, and had then wrenched her basket from her, and seizing on the fresh cheeses which it held, had disappeared again in the forest.

A robber who preferred milk-cheeses to gold coins could not belong to the most dangerous specimens of his kind; but by the time the story had made the round of the place, he had not only grown, but multiplied; and there seemed cause enough for the patrols to walk about with fixed bayonets, challenging every shadow, and taking each other into custody, in the name of the king.

"I do not see any logical grounds for giving up our plan," said Gretchen, on the evening of the event, while the red-hot story was being discussed beside the fountain.

There had been a longer expedition than usual planned for the next day: they had intended to visit a cave among the mountains, and now the party was weighing the advisability of maintaining or relinquishing the idea.

The Bohemian, being consulted

as to the authenticity of the robber, calmly raised his shoulders. The girl was a Roumanian, he remarked, and therefore, of course, more inclined to falsehood than to truth. The account she gave was confused; superstitious terrors had bewildered her faculties. At the first appearance of the man, she had naturally jumped to the conclusion that this was the wicked spirit *Miasanoptie*, under whose evil bane falls every Roumanian who is foolish enough to stand at the crossing of two roads while the sun is setting. "And," added the Bohemian, with scornful pity, "the stupid girl maintains that it is the Tuesday which has brought her bad luck; for—would you believe it?—these people here call the Tuesday a bad day: they will neither begin nor finish anything on a Tuesday."

"But have you not got something of that sort in Bohemia too?" Gretchen ventured to suggest.

"Why, Friday is *our* unlucky day," said the Bohemian, with wondering simplicity. "It is only such ignorant people as these who could make Tuesday the bad day."

"Why, then Bohemians can be superstitious too?"

The Bohemian's blue eyes were fixed upon her with a sort of sorrowful reproach.

"That is not a superstition, Fräulein; that is a belief."

"Well; but to return to the robbers," said Gretchen, unwilling to waste time upon such a nice definition as Bohemian *versus* Rou-

manian superstition. "Do you believe there is any danger? Should you be afraid to go to the hills alone?"

Again the blue eyes gazed at her in mild surprise.

"I am afraid of no man, Fräulein, when my conscience is clear."

"And if we were to meet these robbers, what would they do to us?"

"Take away our money, Fräulein."

"And if we had no money?"

"Then perhaps cut our throats," said the Bohemian in an apologetic tone, as if excusing himself for mentioning such an unpleasant subject before ladies.

Gretchen's face fell a little.

"Then must we give up our expedition?"

"Oh no," said the Bohemian, with a reassuring smile; "there is no need to give it up, if our consciences are clear. For, after all, death must come sooner or later; and if our hour has struck, we cannot escape from it."

"Ye—es," said Gretchen, reflectively.

This was a salutary, but not a particularly cheerful view of the case.

"Oh, our consciences are all as clear as crystal," said Baron Tolnay, breaking into the conversation with a laugh. "Let us go to the cave by all means."

And so finally it was decided; the time for the start fixed, and the Bohemian dismissed.

All this time Princess Tryphosa had stood, a silent member of the group. She made no comment whatever upon the plans; but presently, when Mr Howard left the party, saying, "I am going to get my wading-boots and have another cast in the river," the little group was electrified by the announcement from Tryphosa's lips:

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"I am going too."

There was a general start, and a few broken exclamations. Even Kurt's coolness was troubled for a moment. Baron Tolnay was the first to recover his presence of mind.

"But you have got no wading-boots, Princess."

The Princess stared at him intently. She had to reconcile the idea of wading-boots with the other idea which was present in her mind, and it took her some time to do it.

István attempted to assist the process of thought.

"You want to go to the river, Princess?"

"No; I want to go with you to the cave."

They had talked of the dry weather, of the departing visitors, of the principle cures of the season since then. Princess Tryphosa was still at the cave.

Here was a fresh electrical shock. Nobody believed it at first. More than one member of the party changed colour. Then there followed a pause, and a consciousness of general constraint; for there was no one present who could not easily guess what had moved the Princess to this stupendous resolution.

The Princess herself neither changed colour nor expression. She sat through it all with unmoved stolidity. She waited with inexhaustible patience until the small waves of wonder, of incredulity, of only half-suppressed amusement had broken over her, as the waves of the sea break over a massive and immovable rock.

A desperate question was ventured at last by Gretchen.

"Why are you going?"

After a minute of intense thought, the Princess gave utterance to the blackest lie of which she had ever been guilty in her life:

2 M

"I am fond of caves."

Then Baron Tolnay made an effort.

"It is more than three hours' walk, Princess."

"I know—but I'm going."

"The way is tremendously rough."

"I know—but I'm going."

Only another useless wave. It passed over, leaving no mark on the rock. The resolution had not been an impulse; Princess Tryphosa had no impulses. Every thought with her required to be carefully planted and slowly ripened until it was perfect. It had taken days, even weeks, before she had confessed to herself freely that István Tolnay was deserting her for the sake of the German girl.

That point once established, she recognized the necessity of doing something. After several more days of reflection, she resolved what that something was to be. The principal cause of her uneasiness was those mountain expeditions, so fatally conducive to *tele-d tetes*. Having failed to keep István from them, she had at last matured the tremendous idea of joining them herself.

Tolnay's first effort was his last. The Princess's resolutions might take long to ripen; but, once ripened, no power on earth was capable of balking them. Tolnay knew the woman too well—too fatally well—not to be aware of this. After all, it mattered nothing. It was to be regarded merely as an inconvenience—merely as one more stone to be kicked out of his path. Her whole love was an inconvenience; and yet it was characteristic of István that, even when pressed hardest between his new passion and the troublesome consequences of his old one, the wish never once occurred to him that Tryphosa's love should die a nat-

ural death, and thus release him. It was only the inconvenient expression of that love to which he objected, not the love itself.

Her announced resolution provoked him; it scarcely disturbed him, and he knew that it should not balk him. Living, as he did, only in the excitement of his present passion, everything outside it dwindled in importance. He was madly in love, and he did not care who saw it. Princess Tryphosa herself must see it sooner or later. Let her see it sooner, then, if she be fool enough to buy the information at the cost of so much personal discomfort.

The others fancied that when the moment of ascent came, and Tryphosa found herself in face of the reality, her resolution would fail. István Tolnay knew better.

This woman hated action and despised exercise; she was terrified of the robbers, she suffered from giddiness and loss of breath; but there was a feeling in her that was stronger than her hatred of action and her contempt of exercise, stronger than her dread of bodily discomfort, stronger than her fear of the robbers: it was her love for István Tolnay.

And so, to the wonder of the world, it came to pass that Princess Tryphosa, who was used to spend her day on a soft-cushioned couch, lying motionless for hours at a time; Princess Tryphosa, whose feet were used to nothing harder than embroidered Turkish slippers; who had never in her life seen the inside of a forest, nor walked up anything steeper than the staircase of a *premier*—it came to pass that this marvel of luxurious indolence actually put her high-born feet to the base use of mountain-climbing.

It may sound a small thing to English ears; but many a grander

sacrifice, many a torture endured, many a bloody martyrdom, has been less heroic. It is necessary to have watched a Roumanian woman dragging herself through the laziness of her everyday life, before such a heroism can be measured.

And Princess Tryphosa had the agony to see that it was all in vain. Her immolation was disregarded, her martyrdom was uncrowned; there was no aureole for her head, no palm for her hand. Far on in front she could see Istvan by Gretchen's side, giving to the light-footed Gretchen the assistance of which she, the heavy-stepping Tryphosa, stood so much in need. She had torn her long silk dress; she had walked through the soles of her shoes; her lace was hanging in shreds; the amber rosary which she carried in her pocket had snapped its cord, while the yellow beads went bounding down the hill; she had struggled and panted and gasped, battling bravely through it all, and uttering no complaint. But at last, when standing breathless and flushed on the top of a steep path, she looked on, and perceived that those figures in advance had vanished, and found that she herself was abandoned by all save the good-natured Kurt, who had cheered on her passage by an occasional display of his very best French,—now, at last, her strong spirit seemed in danger of breaking.

Collapsing to a limp heap of lilac silk, she sank down at the foot of a beech-tree, and slowly taking out a costly lace handkerchief, she deliberately burst into tears.

What did Kurt do? Did he attempt to dry her beautiful eyes, as some men would have done? Was he terrified at the hysterical storm of feminine emotion, as some other sort of men might have been?

Neither of the two. Kurt put one hand into his pocket, twirled

his stick with the other, and, looking down at the sobbing woman, said in an encouraging tone—

"Pleurez, madame; cela vous soulagera!"

The effect might have been expected. Tryphosa, though she was a slow woman, was yet a woman, and, being encouraged to weep, she dried her tears with something that almost approached to alacrity.

"Have we lost our way?" she asked.

Kurt did not think they had lost their way yet, but believed it not at all improbable that they should lose it presently, considering that the others were out of sight, and that he himself had never been in this part of the forest before. He hinted at the advisability of advancing.

"Not yet," said the Princess. "I must rest a little longer, and I must think."

Thinking was much easier when sitting at the foot of a tree than when scrambling up a slippery path.

"Very well," said Kurt.

The Princess began to think. She was reviewing her position. Her tactics had been a failure. She had hoped that her presence would be a check upon Tolnay, and she had found out that it was not. Nor would it ever be, for these three hours up the hill had shown her how wildly and how recklessly Istvan was in love. Her first effort had failed; she must make another, but in another direction. That was what she required to think about.

"Does your sister always walk as fast as this?" she inquired.

"Usually. I am always telling her to take things easily, but she does not listen to me. She likes preaching better than being preached to; and when I hit at her obstinacy, she hits at my expensive habits."

The Princess had raised her eyes as she put her question, and they still remained fixed on Kurt's face. It was not as if she were looking at him : it was only as if she had forgotten to remove her eyes while she pursued her meditations. Kurt did not find that fixed gaze to be in the least degree embarrassing.

"She does not listen to you? Does she ever listen to anybody?"

"Not often, I admit ; she has got such a terribly hard head, you see, and is so tremendously logical and strong-minded. I believe she fancies herself sent into the world as a sort of missionary to the great tribe of the illogical : what she would like best would be to distribute logic and justice all round ; she says they are synonymous."

"Thank you ; but please do not speak so fast."

The Princess was silent, carefully dissecting the various elements of thought which were contained in Kurt's phrase.

Kurt was silent also ; he found the Princess puzzling, and he did not know what he was being thanked for.

Presently he found the Princess more puzzling still, when after a little silence she said—

"Then you think that she would understand justice!"

"I think she would box my ears if I told her she did not," said Kurt, cheerfully ; and then he proposed that they should go on.

"Yes ; I am fond of caves," said the poor Princess, in a rather woe-begone tone, as with the help of his arm she struggled to her feet and resumed the battle with the hill.

"Look, my shoes are all torn and my foot is bleeding," she had said to Kurt, merely as though stating a fact, not asking for any compassion ; for after that one burst of tears at the foot of the

beech tree, she had made no more complaint. Her shoes were in tatters indeed, and the hem of her dress was in a fringe ; but she dragged herself along, clinging to Kurt's arm, and bearing her sufferings in silent agony. There was something of an almost divine heroism about this heavily beautiful Roumanian Princess.

When they had reached the top of the next steep slope, her face was flushed to a deep purple, and her fourth silk flounce had given way ; and yet upon her breathlessly parted lips there was a smile, for she had thought out the situation. The case was intricate, and her means well nigh exhausted. Tears, supplications, and reproaches, had all failed in reviving István's extinguished love. It is true that jealousy still remained ; and Tryphosa had reflected upon the advisability of awakening István's jealousy—had carefully considered the idea, had weighed it, and rejected it. Such petty manoeuvrings did not suit the Princess. There were none of those little weaknesses about her, and no taint of meanness. Her mind had been mapped out on a larger scale. She was going to use means more simple and more courageous—perhaps also more desperate. Having failed to work upon the man, she was going to try and work upon the woman.

"Where can they have all gone to?" asked the Princess, staring all round her and above her and below her in open-mouthed wonder ; for they were standing on a tiny platform with no apparent egress.

Below there was a glimpse of rocky mountain-tops, surging away like a sea of petrified waves, to break on the horizon. Around the spot on which they stood the ground was covered with berberry-bushes, where the ripe berries hung

in bunches, like tassels of shaded red. Straight in front of them stood a wall of rock, and at the foot a low opening, half masked by scraggy brushwood.

"Hollosa!" said Kurt; "this is the cave. I hear their voices in there. Nothing for it now but to follow them."

The Princess leaned a little more heavily on his arm, and gasped—

"Must I go into that hole?"

"You are fond of caves, you know, Princess."

She was a courageous woman, though she was so unwieldy. She had gone through so much this day, that really one discomfort more or less could not matter much. Her cup of bitterness might as well be quite full as half full. Princess Tryphosa was not

a woman to do things by halves. She had walked over thorns and stones—she might as well walk into a damp cave.

"Yes; I am fond of caves," she said, rather faintly; and, rallying her resolution for the crowning effort, she went forward without another murmur, trailing her silk dress after her, carrying with her a perfume of distilled roses, and a general air of mock Parisian elegance.

Never before had that wall of rock looked down upon anything as beautiful as her face or as incongruous as her costume. The rock stared down in blank and frigid surprise as the last tip of her coloured train glided vanishing into the cave like the tail of a glittering serpent.

CHAPTER XXIX.—BY TORCHLIGHT.

"Leicht ist di Hölle die den Hass bedeckt."—AUFERBESER.

Though the hole in the rock was so low that mountain-gnomes alone could have entered it upright, yet it proved to be the portal of a space more suited to giants than to dwarfs.

As the party stood together in the cave they looked no more than a tiny group, and the flames of their firwood torches were but little spots of light, lost in the vast blackness around. Their progress was not easy, for the ground was slippery with damp, and irregularly strown with large round stones. Above their heads the vaulted ceiling rose away out of the circle of light; hollows and undefined niches blackened vaguely on all sides. But, where the ceiling lowered, it was of a snowy glistening white, a fine fretwork of delicate points hanging downward, like icicles turned into stone.

The air was chill and clammy; the voices of the speakers sounded unnatural, striking weird echoes against far-off corners, and rolling back towards them with a hollow murmur. And in every silence that fell they could hear a note of melancholy music,—the slow, sad dropping of the ever-filtering water, which, with the patient toil of centuries, had worked out the intricacies of that wonderful fretwork ceiling.

"I suppose the rock is safe," remarked Vincenz, staring upwards at the white stone icicles.

The Bohemian shrugged his shoulders.

"It may be safe, or it may not; if the day and hour for our death have come, there is no use trying to escape it."

"Let us hope for the best," said Kurt, cheerfully.

"And the best is surely a good death," returned the Bohemian, "only that I should be loath to breathe my last in this strange land."

The Bohemian never lost an opportunity of airing his favourite complaint, and even Gretchen had given up arguing with him on the point. In face of all logic, and despite the clearest demonstration, he insisted on considering himself as a stranger and an exile.

"Are we going out again soon?" asked Tryphosa, in a tone of desperate resignation.

Since they had done their duty by looking at the cave, she did not see why the torture should be prolonged.

"Going out again!" repeated Gretchen; "why, we have scarcely come in."

"But we cannot go further," said the poor Princess, in an accent which might have moved a heart of marble. And yet the very tone, instead of softening her fair and cruel rival, seemed rather to steel Gretchen against pity.

All day long the girl had been in a strange humour—a mood of reckless gaiety; different altogether from her usual self-possession. She seemed like a teetotaller who has indulged in wine, and has become light-headed in consequence. Perhaps Tryphosa's presence had spurred her on to this open encouragement of Tolnay, in which she had never so undisguisedly indulged; perhaps István's homage, now quite ostentatious, had intoxicated her for the moment, giving that red-rose flush to her cheek and that deep brilliancy to her eyes. She was lovely; and yet there was about her loveliness to-day something that repelled even while it fascinated, something that startled even while it dazzled.

"We can go a great deal fur-

ther," she decreed, while with her torch held high she looked around her. "This is only the ground-floor, and I want to see the upper storeys; don't you see that we have got staircases all round us? We can explore every one of these niches up there; and I daresay we could walk all round the cave upon that ledge, although perhaps it is a little slippery."

"And we can illuminate the place with our torches," completed István, who, while Gretchen spoke, had already commenced to spring up the perilous rocks at the side. "It is quite safe, Fräulein Mohr," he said, turning.

"It is quite safe, Princess," repeated Gretchen. "Are you coming up also?"

There was a flash of cruel coldness, of an almost wicked triumph, in the gaze which met Tryphosa's. The Princess stood dumb before it; while her hand instinctively felt for the wrecks of the amber rosary, just as she would have sought to protect herself from the presence of some evil spirit.

She stood in a sort of trance, feeling as if every tone of that clear voice was cutting into her heart like a silver blade, knowing that every movement of that graceful figure was a step which crushed her happiness.

She saw, as if in a dream, that Gretchen was mounting the rocks, and that Tolnay held out his hand to help her; she saw but these two figures alone, and she heard not a word of what the others around were speaking.

There had been a general protest at Gretchen's first step up the rocks. Mr Howard had argued, even Kurt had objected; only Dr Komers had stood by silent.

"Do not go up there, Fräulein; it is not safe," entreated the Bohemian.

"It is quite safe," answered Gretchen serenely, from the slippery platform on which she stood; "and besides, you know, if my day and hour have come——"

They had reached the ledge where a niche in the rock formed a sort of sanctuary, a white stone chapel, which shone like ice in the torchlight. The stone was broken here into the finest lace-work, and twisted into Gothic columns.

"I have found some silver," said Gretchen, as she put up her hand, and broke off one of the glistening icicles which hung in a thick and dazzling fringe above her.

Her arm was round the pillar, and as she bent forward, her loosened plaits slipped from their hold and hung down her back. To the spectators below she looked like some vision that was scarcely earthly; to Tryphosa's eyes she was a tempting siren, who was luring her lover into that crystal bower to hide him for ever away from her sight.

As for István, he could not look away; the surroundings excited his ever-ready fancy. This scene bore something of the fairy-like glamour of that other scene, when he had found Gretchen asleep on the bank in the sunset. From the loosened waves of her hair there seemed to pour a flood of fire. He was bewildered and blinded—he saw nothing but her. Without thinking of what he did, he put out his hand and touched the curling end of her hair.

"And I have found some gold," he said, very low, "the most beautiful that the world holds."

"Gretchen!"

Who was calling her? Whose voice was that? So familiar and yet so changed? So calm, and, in its very calmness, so startling?

"Gretchen!" said Vincenz again, and still in that studiously quiet

tone, "I entreat of you to come down."

"Nobody need come up who is afraid," said Tolnay, with a laugh that was all but insolent.

Vincenz did not answer him; he did not even look at him; his eyes were fixed on Gretchen.

"I beg you to come down," he said again; "your father has made me responsible for your safety."

Still she did not speak, standing as immovable as the stone pillar beside her, with her hand in Tolnay's, but with her eyes on those of Vincenz. She appeared to be hesitating, though she said not a word.

"My dear Dr Komers," called back István, "do you really think that nobody but yourself can take care of Fräulein Mohr? Might you not at least leave her a little choice in the matter?"

"Gretchen, come down! I insist on it!" It was his voice again, but this time raised, sharp, and peremptory.

He stood at the foot of the rock and looked upwards; and Gretchen, still hesitating, looked down at him. By his attitude and by his eyes, by the pallor of his face and the suppressed passion of his tone, she knew that in a second more he would be standing beside her on the ledge, and that her obedience would be taken by force, if it were not now given with her will.

"Stay here!" whispered Tolnay, beside her.

"Come down!" said Vincenz, once more.

She made no answer to either, but mechanically she dropped Tolnay's hand; and with her eyes still fixed on Vincenz, she made a step downwards, then stood still, then made another step; moving all the time with the blind groping gestures of a somnambulist, conscious that her will was gone from

her—that she would have liked to resist, but could not, feeling as though his eyes made it impossible for her to disobey.

After the first two steps she staggered, and her nerve seemed all at once to give way. Climbing the rock with her back to the danger had been a very different thing from this sickening descent. She stood clinging to a ledge, not daring to move another step, not daring to look either up or down.

Before the dizziness was passed, she heard Dr Komers's voice close beside her.

"Give me your hand," he said, in a tone of cold command, and she gave it to him.

"Lean on my shoulder."

She obeyed, wondering at her own docility, and seeing not a step of the perilous descent before her.

Without a word, Vincenz lifted her off her feet and in the next minute she was standing at the bottom, released from his arm, but still trembling and grown suddenly pale and breathless.

István had watched the scene from above, glaring down at the two figures, but offering no assistance. He descended the rock leisurely now, and came up to Dr Komers.

"You need not have disturbed yourself," he began, in a tone of artificial politeness. "I also have got brains in my head; I also have got eyes and arms, and Fräulein Mohr's safety is as much in my care as yours."

"It scarcely appeared so," said Vincenz, icily.

István's eyes flashed fire.

"Do you dare to doubt?" he broke out in a higher and more offensive tone; but the lawyer stopped him—

"If you wish to quarrel with me, you must find a better place

and opportunity: it cannot be here."

"Perhaps you prefer not to quarrel," muttered the Hungarian, with a glance of deadly hatred.

He had been flushed a minute ago, but he was paler now than Vincenz himself. It was a terrible revelation which had opened before his eyes. For the first time he had felt that this man was to be feared: and István Tolnay could not fear a man without hating him. It was an alarming revelation, a rude shock to his passion, a mortal wound to his vanity.

"Certainly I prefer not to quarrel,"—and Vincenz turned his pale proud face to his rival; then, with recovered calmness, he moved away towards the others.

The Bohemian was kindling fresh torches to light their passage out; and the half-burnt pieces of fir-wood had been stuck about into convenient cracks of the rock. High up, on the ledge where Gretchen had stood with Tolnay, there was a torch burning its last, for she had left it in the niche. It crackled and flared, dyeing the white stone all around with changeful tints, and shooting arrows of brilliant light into dimly seen, ghostly-grey hollows.

While the party still stood in a group, watching the impromptu illumination, Princess Tryphosa was observed to turn pale; very gradually of course—no change in her ever was sudden.

In a sort of shapeless alarm the others glanced around them. The place was not soothing to human nerves; and every one was conscious of feeling a little on the strain. Had the Princess heard any noise? seen any danger threatening?

Oh no; the cause of Tryphosa's change of colour dated further back than that. She had only now dis-

tinctly realised the danger which had just been passed.

She looked up at the niche above, and shuddered. It was a very substantial shudder which passed through her frame.

"Great heavens!" she gasped, "what a danger! One false step, and he would have been down there, a dead man! Oh, István!"—and she clutched at his arm,— "let us go, let us go away. I—I don't think I like caves very much after all; oh, come away!"

"Yes," said István absently, for he scarcely heard her. His eyes were on Gretchen, where she sat apart on one of the round-topped stones, silently plaiting up her disordered hair.

"Come with me, István!"—Tryphosa still clung to his arm—"help me out; do not stay—there is danger for you here."

Her voice sank to a whisper. She was attempting to draw him with her; but in the same instant she let go his arm, for he had turned and given her a look—one of those fierce looks before which she always trembled. It scarcely needed the word of warning, muttered between his teeth, to shake her from him, silent and subdued.

No one heard what he said, and the gesture by which he had released himself had been scarcely seen; but the scene wanted no interpretation; its meaning was clear, and István's next words made it clearer.

"Why, don't you know that I am far too young and unsteady for a guide?" he said, with a short and disagreeable laugh. "I can recommend you no better protector, Princess, than Dr Komers, who evidently considers himself the only sensible man of the party."

The Princess did not change expression; very likely she had not yet thoroughly realised her defeat.

She mechanically took the arm which Dr Komers offered her in silence.

The others began to follow, straggling off singly. Gretchen was still busy with her hair. She had not regained either her colour or her voice. From the moment of her descent from the niche, her gaiety of the morning was extinguished; pale and listless she sat, and scarcely noticed what passed around her.

Tryphosa's appeal to Tolnay had been the first sound that roused her, and guessing at the slight which was given and received, for her sake, as she knew, it was scarcely triumph that she felt, but rather fear. She trembled to see what power she held over István Tolnay.

With a nervous glance after the departing figures, she rose to her feet to follow. István was the only one who had lingered behind.

"Is the last of the illumination to be wasted?" he asked. "Do you not want to see the torches burn down?"

He was not laughing as was his wont; there was about his tone and eyes a seriousness which Gretchen had rarely seen in him.

"I—I think I must go," she faltered; "the torches will be out in a moment, and we should be lost in the dark."

"Ah, I understand"—and he bent a little nearer to her—"you have to obey orders, of course. Has the family lawyer given his commands?" He was laughing again, but without any mirth.

Gretchen's lips quivered, and without any answer, she sat down again upon the round-topped stone beside her. At the thought of her most unaccountable obedience to Dr Komers, she was ready to sink with shame. She could think of no logical reason to explain her

conduct; but perhaps by now lingering behind, she might hope to redeem at least the shadow of her independence.

There were many more of the round-topped stones scattered about; in shape like monster cheeses, and in brilliancy like crystallised sugar. István sat down upon another of these stones; and he also kept silent.

The torch that Gretchen had left in the niche still burnt brightly, but it was the brightness of approaching death. Each smouldering piece of firwood sent its floating breath upwards in circling wreaths. The lights leaped up and sank down, burning deep red and palest yellow by turns, while even the crackling of the firwood was enough to wake whispering echoes in the rock.

One torch flared up, scattered a few red sparks, then died down in an instant, swallowing, as it were, a whole vista of rock into darkness.

"You have made me very happy," said István at last, watching her fingers, as they moved in and out of her hair, still plaiting it up.

"Your happiness is cheap, then," she said, attempting to speak lightly, though her heart was beating fast; "and I don't know how you come by it now."

"Don't you? Merely by your staying here when I asked you."

"Really, Baron Tolnay, I cannot see how so absurd a trifle should affect you one way or the other."

"A trifle!" István gave a peculiar smile. "What is a trifle? A ribbon is a trifle; a flower is a trifle; and men have killed each other for less than that."

"Men are wiser than they used to be."

"Ha! Our old dispute; the age of reason and the age of

romance. Do you remember our talk that evening by the fountain?"

"Well, yes, my memory is not short," she said, with studied indifference.

"Do you remember looking into the water?"

"Yes."

"Did you see anything there, I wonder?" said István, musing. "Was there nothing written in the Waters of Hercules?"

While he spoke, a second torch grew faint and went out. There were only three more torches burning now.

Gretchen dared give no answer to István's last words. She began to understand that she had done a very foolish thing when she sat down again upon this glittering stone. Far ahead she could see the rest of the party; the light of their torches shone towards the narrow entrance of the cave. How she longed to be with them! She would have risen, but some instinct told her that her first movement would conjure up the crisis which she dreaded; safety lay only in quiescence; she was prisoner upon her stone.

"You have made me very happy," said István again, slowly, softly, with a sort of lingering enjoyment in the words; "and you have made some one else very unhappy."

He paused for a moment, then said between his teeth—

"I hate that man."

He was very pale, and his eyes glittered; but the words had been so low that Gretchen felt herself exempt from the necessity of answering. And what answer could she have made, even had she been able to command her voice. Every word seemed loaded with gunpowder, and each one might explode.

"Another torch gone," said István, almost in a whisper.

"It will be dark very soon."

"Very soon," he said, watching the sinking torchlight dreamily.

It was a moment of strange, luxurious, undefined, yet intense enjoyment to István Tolnay. He wished to prolong the sensation. He was drifting towards something, some crisis which he had always felt was coming, and to which yet he had never distinctly given expression, even in his own thoughts,—to which perhaps he had no right to give expression, but that did not trouble him. The waters which carried him along breathed such a soothing perfume, such a narcotic scent, that it clouded every disturbing thought. That which he was going to do, or going to say in the next minute, he had never distinctly contemplated—not yesterday, not this morning, not even this minute exactly. He never made plans, and he had not made plans either in this. It was merely that he felt it coming, and that the sensation was one of dreamy enjoyment. He wished that he could prolong it indefinitely.

"We ought to be going," said Gretchen; "there is only one torch remaining."

"Only one more? so much the better."

The last torch was the one in the niche, and with its perishing fire it threw a golden net over Gretchen's hair. It flashed and darkened with wild changes, flickering up and sinking, only to flicker up again.

"Look!" said István, "there are good words written in the fire! Can you read them?"

He spoke slowly; but his eyes were fevered with excitement.

"Look! do you not see? The same words that were written in the fountain. The fire and the water speak alike. Gretchen, will you not tell me what you saw written in the Hercules fountain?"

With the last words came a sudden change of tone. Instinctively she shrank back.

He bent quite close to her and whispered—

"Was there not written, '*I love you*'?" and, seizing her hand, he dragged it to his lips. "I love you, Gretchen, more than my life! and you belong to me—you belong to me!"

He was kissing both her hands, and the plait of hair she held. She felt that his own fingers trembled, and were burning hot.

At the same moment, a stone displaced by one of the torches got loosened from its hold, and went rattling and bounding downwards past them.

"I am frightened!" cried Gretchen, starting from her glistening seat.

Her fright was real enough; but it was not the stone which had frightened her.

And, without giving him an answer—without casting him a glance—she wrenched her hand away, and hurried on, groping her way forward to the daylight; while behind her the last torch glowed up once more, like a fiery rose fading at the foot of the white column; then, scattering its flaming petals to the air, it shrivelled to a spark, to a mere point of light, then was gone altogether, and the vast cave sank back into its habitual darkness.

CHAPTER XXX.—A GRANTED PRAYER.

"Vous l'avez voulu, Georges Dandin, vous l'avez voulu."—MOLIÈRE.

The morrow of the visit to the cave was the eve of the Franco-pazzi's departure from the Hercules valley, and early in the afternoon Gretchen set forth to pay her farewell visit.

When she knocked at the door of the apartments, she was encouraged to enter by Belita's voice saying "*Avanti*," in a somewhat muffled tone, the reason of which was soon obvious to Gretchen.

Belita was on her knees in the centre of the room, with more than a dozen pins in her mouth, and she was busied in draping the folds of a long grey tunic. This grey tunic (destined to form part of the Contessa's travelling dress) was at this moment worn by the Conte, who, in the character of lay-figure, was standing motionless and patient before his wife. He did not make a bad lay-figure by any means; he possessed the requisite slenderness of waist, and the requisite serenity of temper—in the matter of height alone did he fall short of the desired mark. But Belita was a woman of resources; she had obviated the difficulty by making her lord and master take up his position on a footstool, which raised his figure to the majestic proportions desirable for ensuring the successful fall of the tunic.

The Conte bowed with all the grace he could muster under the circumstances, and Belita, having disposed of her pins, addressed her visitor cheerfully.

"They looped up this thing so atrociously, my dear, that I have been forced to do it all over again. I could not have travelled a mile in it, as it was; utterly without *chic*. Take a chair, my dear child,

and read something; I shall be at your disposal presently. I am glad you have come, for I wanted to talk to you. A little more to the left, please, *Ludovico caro*."

Gretchen, sitting down, applied herself to the only shape of literature visible, which was French fashion-papers. Here she was informed that diamond lizards were out of fashion, and that the new shape of jacket promised to be a wonderful success. She was begged not to suppose that *chaussure* was remaining stationary; also she was recommended to wear diamonds, happily mixed with opals.

She tossed the paper aside, and leant out of the window. Down there a travelling carriage, ready packed with luggage, stood waiting for some departing visitor. The Hercules valley was beginning to wear its autumn look—a look of desertion and solitude. Every day now made the change more sensible. There were fewer people lounging in the Cursalon, fewer people walking in the arcades: the meals on the oleander-shaded verandah grew daily less noisy and less crowded. More than one shop had put up its shutters for good, and stowed away the unsold things in the big wooden packing-cases which had brought them there in spring. The sun was bright, but no longer hot; the air so chilled and clear, that every sound in the valley sharpened into acute distinctness. They had seen the Hercules valley slowly waking from its winter sleep, stretching itself, as it were, yawning and rubbing its many eyes; it was strange now to watch the eyes closing one by one,

as the place slowly sank back into the heavy torpor which yearly overpowered it. What a gulf between those days and these! Was there not a whole lifetime, a whole world separating now and then? Then Gretchen had felt so sure that the Hercules Waters were going to restore her father to health; and now Adalbert was as far from recovery as he had been then. Ah! must she confess it at last?—further than he had been then. Then Gretchen's path in life had lain so broad and distinct before her—now she had lost her way, and there was no sign-post to put her right again; then she had been content with her prospects of fortune, and now—

There was the sound of a stumble behind her; and looking round, she saw the Conte Francopazzi descending from his elevation, being released from the tunic, and dismissed from the room.

"It will do now," said Belita with a sigh of relief; "in fact I don't think I should be saying too much if I called it a *chef-d'œuvre* of drapery. I cannot tell you how useful it is to have a husband for looping up your tunics on!"

There was no echo to the sentiment; Gretchen, without a word, flung her arms on to the wide window-sill, and stared down at the street below.

Belita looked at her friend's back, raised her eyebrows, and shook her head.

"I hope she is not losing her senses," reflected the Contessa with a twinge of anxiety; "I really must speak to her."

But before Belita had time to speak, Gretchen herself turned suddenly from the window, and put a strange, abrupt question to her friend.

"Tell me, Belita, have I been

mistaken all along? Are fortune and happiness after all two things and not one?"

"Fortune and happiness?" Belita staggered in her stupefaction, not so much at the words as at the tone. She fell back a step, actually forgetful of the *chef-d'œuvre* of drapery which she still held, and stood gazing at her friend with a sort of tender fear.

But Belita's presence of mind never deserted her for long. Her first care was for her tunic, her second for her friend. Taking Gretchen by the hand, she led her to a seat, and made her sit down; and Gretchen sat down with perfect submission, only upon her face and in her widely opened eyes there was a look of hungry expectation, as though she were listening for the answer of an oracle.

"Are you quite sure you are not ill?" asked Belita, affectionately. "I always said that the air of the Hercules valley did not agree with you."

"I am quite well," said Gretchen; "but you have not answered me."

"Immediately, my dear child; what doubt can you have of my answer? Of course fortune and happiness are two names for one thing."

"But not always!"

"Of course always."

"How do you know it?"

"By personal experience. I am rich and I am happy; therefore it stands to reason that when you are rich—"

"Oh no," said Gretchen, putting her hands to her ears—"stop! it does not stand to reason at all,—nothing stands to reason, I think."

Belita had no right to turn her own weapons against her; and for the first time it struck Gretchen that her pet phrase sounded weak and senseless.

"*Misericordia!* What a temper! Well, you can follow up the deduction for yourself; you were always the stronger of us two in logic. You know how hard I tried for the *prix de logique* which you carried off so swimmingly."

"Why will you keep harping on that old story?" was the impatient retort.

Somehow the memory of that triumph was not a congenial thought to-day; and with a start, Gretchen checked herself on the verge of the heretical reflection that the reputation of having gained a *prix de logique* is not the easiest thing in the world to live up to.

"And now," said Belita, carefully scrutinising her friend's face, "be so kind as to tell me what other possible answer you could have expected to your most incomprehensible question?"

"I thought there might be another sort of happiness, that is all." She was speaking more to herself than to Belita.

"*Misericordia!*" murmured the Contessa, wringing her hands, "she has been reading books; she has got a poetical fit upon her. I wonder how these cases should be treated?"

"What other sort could possibly exist?" she continued, after a disconcerted pause. "People make such a fuss about missing their happiness, and so on; but you and I, Margherita, are wiser: we know that the way is simple. You have only got to marry a rich man, who is good-natured, and who, if possible, matches you in height,—whom you don't mind seeing every day, but whom you will not miss when he is away, and who can make himself useful—"

"For looping up tunics on, for instance?" suggested Gretchen.

"For looping up tunics on,

exactly," said the Contessa, unperturbed.

"But are you and I wiser, Belita? That is what I want to know. We are either much wiser or much more foolish than the rest of the world."

Perhaps the growing consternation of Belita's face alarmed Gretchen as to what she had said. Without waiting for an answer, she snatched up the fashion-paper beside her.

"Why do you keep nothing but these ridiculous papers? Novels are much more interesting."

"Novels! just as I feared," sighed Belita to herself. Her worst apprehensions were justified.

"Did you read that novel I sent you, Belita?"

"I glanced at it, my dear; but I do not think it was worth finishing. The idea of making the heroine wear a chignon, when every educated person knows that chignons were quite out of fashion in 1870. I read as far as the chignon, but I never could get over that."

"Then you do not know the end? I sat up all night reading it."

"A very foolish thing for you to do."

"I could not get to sleep without knowing whether the heroine would give up the hero or not, after he had lost his fortune."

"And she did not?"

"No; she did not."

"More fool she. But he got back his fortune, of course? They always do at the end of the third volume."

"He did get back his fortune," Gretchen reluctantly admitted.

Belita shook her head.

"I do not understand you Margherita."

"Really? How strange!"

What would not Gretchen have given to any one at that moment

who could have helped her to understand herself?

"You are not like yourself to-day; you have not been like yourself for some time past. It never used to be your habit to sit up reading novels by night, nor by day either, for the matter of that."

Gretchen made no answer; she was not listening. Her eyes were fixed before her, her thoughts were busily painting two pictures and putting them in contrast to each other.

One picture was painted in brilliant colours, and the canvas was somewhat crowded with gorgeous objects. There was a carriage with a baron's crown painted on the panel; there was a glimpse of brilliant apartments, a glitter of jewels; there was everything which she had figured in her dreams of ambition.

On the second picture there was very little, only a steep winding staircase, a dusty ivy-plant in the window, and, as centre-piece, a hard-worked man coming home at night weary from his desk.

Surely there could be no hesitation in the choice. Why, it was not even a matter of choice, she thought, as she detected herself contrasting these two pictures. She had twice been asked to walk up that steep staircase, and she had refused; she was not going to be asked a third time. Somebody else would water the ivy-plant in the window. Perhaps Barbara Bitterfreund. She wondered what Barbara Bitterfreund was like.

Belita's voice recalled her to realities.

"Margherita?" began the Contessa abruptly.

"Well?"

"Do you remember the first day when we walked in the arcades?"

"What of it?"

"I meant then to give you a lecture upon life in general; and

afterwards we met Baron Tolnay, and I did not; well, I mean to give you that deferred lecture now. Here I am on the eve of my departure, and I certainly had hoped before starting to give you my maternal benediction on an auspicious occasion. In fact I made the sacrifice of keeping a new dress for *jour de fiançailles*, and the trimming is now *démodé* and consequently wasted. I cannot understand why you have not brought Baron Tolnay to the point long ago; you are playing with your chances. If you were a classical beauty you could afford to wait; but I have told you often, *Bambina*, that strictly speaking you are more picturesque than beautiful. To put it clearly, without beating about the bush, which is a thing I detest,—you look too breakable for many tastes, and it is only a rich man who can afford breakable luxuries. It is a mere chance whether you happen to hit a man's fancy or not."

Gretchen, as she sat listening to the empty, vapid, good-natured chatter, was wondering how she had never till now discovered its emptiness and its absurdity.

"Are you sure that is all?" she asked with a curl of her lip. "Have you no more advice to give me?"

"Certainly I have, and you need it all; for you are unfortunately a German, my dear child, and in every German there is hidden a seed which should be crushed in early childhood. Even *you* cannot, it seems, quite escape from the commonplace taint of sentimentality which is the ruin of your nation. You are only a German after all."

"And you are only an *Élégante*!" broke out Gretchen with a sudden burst of indignation; "you are nothing but a heartless *Élégante*."

She felt so angry at the moment that she would not have minded quarrelling even with Belita.

But nothing was further from Belita's mind than quarrelling. She left her chair, and going up to Gretchen, embraced her with effusion.

"Margherita mia! you have made me quite happy! An *Elégante*! Why, that is the height of my ambition; the very title which I am striving to live up to. I thank you immensely for that word."

"And this," thought Gretchen bitterly,—“this is the oracle to whom I have come for advice. This is the woman who has been my friend!”

Poor Gretchen! Her logic was at fault again; she had looked for a head and a heart where all was empty. Such people as this have not got heads, they have got *coiffures*; they have not got hearts, they have got *ceintures* or cuirasses, or whatever form of covering the fashion prescribes; they have not even got hands and feet, but only *chaussure* and *gants de Suède*, and they themselves consist much more of bodices than of bodies.

Gretchen rose from her chair to take leave.

"What! going already, *Bambina*? Are you sure you have no more questions to ask? Remember that I am always ready with my advice; always 'come to me when you are in doubt—promise!'"

"Yes," said Gretchen, with an odd smile, "I promise. I shall always come to you when I am in doubt—about the draping of a tunic."

"Which next time will be the tunic of your wedding dress, of course; *eh, sicuro*, child; don't shake your head! What a fright you gave me, to be sure, with your

'other sort of happiness'! Why, have you not proved to me a hundred a times yourself (not that I wanted it proved) that fortune is the only sort of happiness worth having, because it can buy every other?"

"I have"—it echoed in Gretchen's heart.

"Did you not boast a hundred times that your experience was gathered for you beforehand?"

"I did—oh yes, I did," thought Gretchen.

"Oh, Margherita, that I should have to remind you of this!"—there was an hysterical quiver in Belita's voice, she had seized her friend's hand between her own—"that I should have to remind you that your fortune is still to be made!"

"My fortune, yes," said Gretchen, with a start. "I—I, of course,—I am going to make my fortune, but I told you that it shall be in my own way."

"And that way leads to *Gaura Dracului*, I suppose," sneered Belita. "Are you not yet cured of that pretty little fable about the brigands' treasure? Why, oh most contradictions of all maidens, will you persist in hunting for your fortune among the hills, when by merely marrying Baron Tolnay your fortune is made, and how brilliantly?"

"But," said Gretchen, slowly, "if I find the brigands' treasure, then my fortune is made at any rate, and I can marry whom I like."

She had scarcely said it, when she took fright at herself. For the space of a few seconds she stood, staring back into Belita's horror-stricken eyes, then hastily lowered her long lashes and guiltily drooped her head. She took fright at the fright of her friend, for if there was so much horror

written in Belita's eyes, what must there be written in her own? With a rush of crimson to her cheek, Gretchen wrenched herself free, and before Belita could stop her, she had reached the door and was gone.

She ran home, almost as if she feared pursuit. It seemed to her that she could not have stood Belita's piercing gaze for a moment longer, that she could not have borne another word of Belita's; and, no doubt, with the Contessa's ingrained antipathy to beating about the bush, that next word, if spoken, would have been disagreeably plain. She felt like a person with a guilty secret, like an undiscovered criminal, like a murderer whose confidence the black forest and the midnight hour have kept, but who cannot meet the sunshine without thinking, "They will see the red stain on my hands, and they will know that I am guilty."

Gretchen ran home to look for solitude and peace; but neither solitude nor peace were to be hers to-day. On the very threshold a new trial lay in wait.

The afternoon post had capriciously chosen to be punctual to-day; and Herr Mohr, with querulous impatience, was inquiring why his daughter was not at home to read his letters aloud. This had been Gretchen's office ever since the commencement of her father's illness. She had as yet showed herself a punctual and business-like secretary; but to-day it was with somewhat disordered thoughts, and an anything but undivided attention, that she applied herself to her duty.

There were four letters to be read; and everything went smooth during the reading of the first three; the fourth was addressed in a handwriting not familiar to Gretchen; but it bore the postmark of

Kurt's college town. Letters with this postmark had been rather frequent lately, though they had always been addressed to Kurt himself, and never to his father.

"What excellent correspondents your fellow-students are!" Gretchen had once remarked; and Kurt had answered with a laugh, "Oh! aren't they just? and so affectionate too!"

On this occasion Gretchen had felt a passing flash of curiosity, and a passing pang of uneasiness. The great affection of Kurt's school friends had not appeared to her to be reassuring, not like the habit of schoolfellows in general. However, she had so many other things to think of, that the subject had not weighed on her mind for long; and to-day, as she opened the fourth letter, she scarcely noticed the postmark it bore.

"SIR,—The continued silence, with which my seven previous communications have been met, compels me, however much against my will, to adopt this new course, in order to obtain——"

Thus far Gretchen had read mechanically, but all at once she drew up.

"Well," said Herr Mohr, testily, "is that all?" and Ascelinde, who sat at the further end of the room, an apathetic and uninterested listener, looked up with an inquiring stare.

"I—I think it is a mistake," stammered the daughter, while with lightning haste her eye skimmed the page. "Borrowed sum," "term of repayment," "money advanced to your son," and other expressions which she was able to snatch in passing, were enough to give her the key of the mystery. That vulgar old spectre called "debt" had started up, and was staring her in the face; and be-

hind it hovered all its train of hook-nosed Jews and monstrous percentages.

"A mistake!" echoed Herr Mohr. "It strikes me that you are making nothing but mistakes to-day; you turned the Wednesday in the date of the first letter into Ash-Wednesday, and you made Steinwurm talk of caves instead of crypts. What is this new mistake about?"

"It is—is—that is to say, I think the letter is not for you, papa; it is meant for some one else," and she crushed the perilous letter into the depths of her pocket.

"Then why do you open some one else's letter," asked the invalid sharply.

"Because—well, I think the address was not distinct."

"It is you who are not distinct. I could scarcely make out a line of what you read to-day; you never used to mumble in this way before. I suppose"—with a touch of increased asperity—"that it is not so amusing to read aloud letters to an old man, as to walk about the hills with a young one."

Gretchen could not answer, though her cheek was burning. She longed to rise and be gone to her own room, but she knew that this mood of her father's was not to be escaped.

"A tiresome office," he was saying, still in that tone of melancholy cynicism which had grown upon him since his illness; "but cheer up, Gretchen, you will soon be quit of it. Instead of acting the secretary, you will be commanding one. I suppose my Lady Baroness will be too grand ever to dip a pen in ink herself, or to be troubled with deciphering the crooked caligraphy of the age?"

The tears were in Gretchen's eyes; she dared not move, for fear that they should fall; she dared

not speak, for fear that her voice should betray her. But, silent though she was, something in her face betrayed her all the same; for with a sudden change of tone her father said—

"Why, Gretchen, you look as woe-begone as though the splendour of your own good fortune frightened you. You are luckier than a princess in a fairy tale; you cried for the moon and you have got it. What is wrong with it now? Is it too big, or too bright? Does it burn your fingers? Or would your ladyship like the sun better? It was your own wish, you know."

"My own wish—yes, my own wish," repeated Gretchen to herself.

True again—all quite true. Belita was right; her father was right. Everywhere there stood her own wishes, her own arguments, her own words, her own self between her and—ah, between her and what? There, indeed, was the rub; something unutterable, undefinable—something which she dared not look at, dared not think of, and yet could not crush.

She started from her chair; there was no peace here either, and no concealment for the poor criminal. In the privacy of her own chamber she meant to seek it; and certainly, to reach her room unmolested did not seem an unreasonable desire, nor an unfeasible undertaking. But there are days when the furies will follow a man about step by step; and the spirits of evil had hold of Gretchen to-day. She had got no further than the passage when there was a rustle of drapery behind her; and turning round, she found herself confronted by her mother, who had sat by, an apparently indifferent spectator of the scene just passed.

But Gretchen scarcely recognised

her mother now ; there was a flush on her cheek, there was light again in the eyes, which, since the day when they fell upon the walls of Draskócs, had seemed to have grown dim for ever. What had brought this change ? What had worked this instantaneous transformation ? Gretchen was soon to know.

Ascelinde did not say much : but what she said was enough for Gretchen. Flinging her massive arms around her daughter's neck, she murmured in her ear—

"I could not believe it till now ; it was too good to be true. I thought that Fate had nothing but disappointments in store for us. Oh, my daughter !" and her voice swelled to exultation, "Draskócs will be Draskócs after all, for you will rebuild the house of my ancestors !"

Majestically she swept from the spot, and went to dream of the real stone walls that were to rise, and the real white swans that were to swim round the real Draskócs of the future. Hitherto Baron Tolnay's suit had been to her a dim and far-off thing—a sort of distantly twinkling star too shapeless to penetrate the profundity of that grief, the fondling and fostering and petting of which now formed her sole interest in life. It was only to-day, during Adalbert's pointed remarks to his daughter, that, roused from her apathy, there had flashed across her mind the grand inspiration to which she had just given utterance. She was almost as happy, while she built her Draskócs in the air, while she furnished the rooms, laid the pavement and peopled the stables, as she had been in the far-off, dream-beguiled, deceptive ante-Draskócs days.

And Gretchen stood where her mother had left her, and gazed round her in the empty passage,

with the stare of an animal at bay.

A cold dread was creeping over her, a nameless panic was shaking her.

She was chained and prisoned ; but the chains were of her own forging, the prison of her own building ; what right had she to complain ? Golden chains ! A golden prison-wall. But ah, how heavy, how oppressive ! Turn which way she might, the passage was barred. On all sides the same assurance, the same smiles, the same unhesitating confidence that her lot was cast.

"And it *is* cast !" thought Gretchen. "I have cast it myself."

She herself had composed the recipe for her happiness ; there was no ingredient wanting—neither the silver florins, nor the golden ducats, nor the coronet. How was it then, that the result tasted so much more bitter than sweet ? so much more like misery than happiness ?

In common logic and in common justice she had no right now to reverse her fate, and she had no idea of reversing it. A desperate quiet, a numb feeling of resignation began to steal over her. She was conscious only of a helpless shinking from the moment of the crisis. Yesterday it had been all but completed ; next time it would be completed. It was impossible to meet Baron Tolnay again as a mere acquaintance. To-morrow they were to be on the mountains again, and to-morrow her fate would be clenched. Oh, rather to-morrow than to-day ! rather next hour than this hour ! rather even next minute than this minute !

Respite was what she asked for, and in the meantime peace. Surely now, at last, she could reach her

room undisturbed, and find there the solitude for which she panted.

She was not two steps from that haven, when Kurt, turning the corner, met her close. At the sight of her brother she instantly remembered that letter in her pocket, which had lain there forgotten since the moment of the broken-off reading. Without reflection, she pulled out the crumpled paper and held it towards him.

Kurt received it calmly, and read it attentively; while, speechless with sisterly indignation and brimful of overwhelming reproaches, Gretchen watched his face.

There was not much to see on Kurt's face; nothing but an easy good-humour and a perfect self-confidence was written there.

"So you have found it out," he remarked pleasantly, while with serene composure he folded up the paper.

"Oh, Kurt, how could you!" cried Gretchen, in her severest tone of censure, before which Kurt was accustomed *not* to quail.

"Yes; I am in a devil of a mess!" he said, with a particularly bright smile. "Lucky for me that the way out of it is so short?"

"At your age!" groaned his sister, wringing her hands, too excited to pay much heed to the latter half of his phrase.

"Some of us begin early and some of us begin late," returned Kurt, with all the *aplomb* of a thrice-bankrupt *roué*. "But surely a woman of your logical powers will admit that the immorality of the proceeding is not greater at sixteen than at twenty-six?"

"I admit nothing," said Gretchen, "it all comes from your smoking cigars and drinking wine, when you should have been learning your lessons in the school-room."

"My habits are expensive, that much I grant;" and Kurt pulled up his shirt-collar with a shade of extra complacency. "It is a great mistake my not having been born a millionaire; but it was nature who blundered there, and not I——"

"No more nonsense, please," remarked Gretchen, with a frown of judicial severity; "and let us keep to what is, not to what might have been. Why have you kept the matter a secret?"

"Why? Because it would have disagreed with my father."

"It will disagree with him all the more when he has to pay the accumulated percentages."

"Oh, well, but perhaps he won't have to pay them," said Kurt, mysteriously.

"How can that be? Have you come to any settlement? Has Dr Komers been advising you?"

Her brother looked at her and laughed.

"Dr Komers! Oh no, my dear Gretchen; the family lawyer is not the man to help me. It is your other friend that I look to."

"My friend! What do you mean?"

"You see," said Kurt, leisurely puffing his cigar, "I was fool enough to count upon Draskócs, or rather, Herr Mandelbaum was fool enough to count upon it for some time; and now——"

"And now, well?"

"Now I count upon something else."

"Please explain yourself," said Gretchen, coldly.

"I have explained myself already. I told you that I counted upon your other friend."

Gretchen stared back at him with a little flush on her cheeks.

"Look here," said Kurt, knocking the ashes off his cigar, "perhaps you don't mind telling me

what you and Tolnay talked about yesterday in the cave when you stayed behind."

The transition, in the first moment, might appear abrupt; but an uneasy suspicion was already knocking at Gretchen's heart.

"What has that got to do with it? We talked about the cave, of course."

"Oh, of course, naturally; and about the beauties of nature and the geological causes of the stoneformation, and so on. Oh yes, I know; but you will not go on talking about caves for much longer, I presume."

Gretchen's face had grown scarlet.

"Kurt—I——"

"Do not wish to dwell upon the subject. I understand. What I meant to say was simply that I have the greatest confidence in Tolnay's coming forward in a handsome and gentlemanlike fashion, for which I esteem him highly in advance."

"Really, Kurt, this is unbearable!" cried Gretchen, turning away. "It is bad enough for a boy of your age to make debts; you need not make jokes about it too!"

"Jokes!" echoed Kurt, good-naturedly; "you have no notion how serious I am. There is no need for you to go in for such excessive unconsciousness, when everybody knows that the affair must be settled within the week."

"What affair?"

"Since you will have me speak plainly, your marriage with Baron Tolnay."

"And supposing I do not marry

Baron Tolnay?" she asked, turning at the door of the room.

He looked at her for a moment, then began to laugh.

"My dear Gretchen, it is you who are joking now; and I must confess that your choice of a subject is not a very happy one. You might try and hit upon something that is either more amusing or more credible."

"Do you mean to say that I am to marry Baron Tolnay in order that your debts should be paid?"

"I think you have plenty of other reasons for marrying him, and those few beggarly thousand florins can go along with it."

It was to be borne no longer; the conspiracy was unanimous. The words and the smiles on all sides agreed; and every word was a new stone in the wall, every smile a golden link of the chain which she had forged to bind herself. Would not the very leaves on the trees lift up their voices next to taunt her? Would not the sparrows chirp, and the insects hum into her ear—"You wanted it yourself; you have your wish now; of what do you complain?"

Her courage had carried her thus far; it would carry her no further. She turned upon her brother a gaze which was meant to be haughty, but which first wavered into despair, and then melted into tearfulness.

"Oh, Kurt, you too!" she cried, with sudden wildness; and before her brother's eyes, the cool-headed, the self-possessed, the logical-minded Gretchen burst into a storm of absolutely illogical, but not the less burning tears.

REMINISCENCES OF SIR HERBERT STEWART.

BY A BROTHER OFFICER.

"HE is the best youngster I ever saw join a regiment," was the observation made by a popular officer of some standing in the service, shortly after Herbert Stewart joined the army. That this opinion was well deserved has been proved by the late Sir Herbert's short but brilliant career, the fatal ending of which, all who knew him and served with him do now so deeply deplore. A few reminiscences of his life, by one who had the privilege of his intimate friendship, may be interesting at the present time, while his memory is still fresh, and the circumstances amid which he met his death are still so engrossing men's minds.

Herbert Stewart was gazetted ensign in the 37th Regiment, now the First Battalion of the Hampshire, in 1863. In the beginning of 1864 he joined at Aldershot, bringing with him the reputation (not an unimportant one in a good old English regiment) of having been captain of the eleven at Winchester School. The 37th were devoted to cricket, and the new subaltern proved an immense acquisition to the regimental team; he will be long remembered among cricketers as one of the best amateur wicket-keepers in England. With his valuable assistance, the regimental eleven of the old 37th was for many years hard to beat.

As a youngster, Stewart was never one of those who took pleasure in midnight orgies or practical jokes—amusements sometimes too much in vogue among young officers—but on festive occasions he preferred the whist-table or the billiard-room, where he always

ranked much above the average player.

At Dover, whence the regiment proceeded from Aldershot, Stewart mainly distinguished himself at cricket and boating. In the regimental six-oar no man pulled a better stroke. He possessed in great perfection that ready co-operation of hand and eye so essential to success in all manly sports. Some of the older members of the Dover Club must still recollect his skill at billiards—his brilliant winning hazards at pool. This may seem a trifling matter; but Stewart's play indicated that swift judgment, quick decision, and imperturbable temper which so distinguished his after-career—the success of which was predicted by those who knew him well.

Promotion was exceptionally rapid in the 37th Regiment at the time of which I write—many subalterns getting their companies after less than four years' service. Stewart was promoted to Lieutenant in 1865, and selected for the Adjutancy in 1866.

From Dover the regiment was sent to Ireland, where it spent a short year in various stations; and officers who were then quartered in that country must still remember Stewart's feats in cricket-matches at the Curragh, Cork, and Fermoy.

In July 1866 the headquarters of the 37th, with Stewart as Adjutant, embarked at Queenstown in "the good ship *Blenheim*," bound for Calcutta. Good ship, however, proved a misnomer in this case, as the vessel grounded on the sandbanks at the mouth of the Hooghly, where she narrowly escaped ship-

wreck,—bumped about during a whole night, and was eventually so damaged that she was afterwards condemned, and never went another voyage. An awful night of peril and suspense was passed—necessarily a crucial test of pluck and character, death staring all in the face. The young Adjutant on this trying occasion manifested the coolness and courage which were afterwards so prominently shown in his career.

On its arrival in India, the regiment was stationed in the Rohilkund district—one of the finest in that country for sport. Here it remained four years in different stations—Bareilly, Shahjehanpore, Moradabad. In the immediate neighbourhood is found the best of wild-duck, snipe, and other shooting; while a night's *dak* places one on the skirts of the “terai,” the grandest field in the world for *shikar*.

The 37th was at that time a young and very sporting regiment, and it had the good fortune to be commanded by a colonel who was second to none in the use of the rifle and the rod, and the keenest of all in every manly exercise. Under these auspicious circumstances, it is not surprising that the officers made the most of this elysium of the *shikari*. Tiger-shooting and other sporting-parties were frequently organised; and Stewart was one of the most ardent and indefatigable of sportsmen.

Many men, after the novelty of killing their first tiger, find a certain tameness in this form of sport, and Stewart went in with perhaps more zest for the wild life and difficult stalking of the Himalayas and Thibet. In the latter elevated and treeless country the necessary hard work tells severely on the constitution; and only the most robust and enthusiastic of stalkers

are likely to meet with success. It showed a good deal of determination and self-reliance for a “grif” fresh from England, with little knowledge of the country, or the language, ways, and manners of the natives, to start alone across these lofty mountain-ranges, and make double marches in order to catch up his Colonel, who had preceded him eight or ten days. This Stewart accomplished; and the party afterwards crossing the snowy range at the Niti Pass, made a most successful six months' trip to Thibet, returning with many trophies of *Ovis ammon*, burrel, &c. A similar expedition was undertaken from Cashmere by the same party in 1871, when a famous bag was made. These journeys entail very severe exertion, long and difficult marches on foot, and many days must often be passed without a sign of game or the chance of firing a shot.

Promoted to Captain in 1868, and proceeding on leave to Simla, Stewart was selected by General X—as his aide-de-camp. Many officers and civilians who were in Bengal at the time, will recollect him well in that position, and how people were sometimes heard to speak of “Stewart and his General”! We next find him employed in the Quartermaster-General's department in the camp of exercise at Delhi; and afterwards in the same capacity at Meean Meer. Whilst there the 37th arrived, and in about a fortnight lost, by an outbreak of cholera, over one hundred lives. The recognised best plan of action in such an emergency is to move the stricken regiment (if possible across a river), and in every way try to keep up the spirits of the men by games, music, &c.—anything, in fact, to prevent the mind from dwelling on the terrible position.

Stewart's character came out

strongly during this trying time ; and the services of the young Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General were invaluable in planning, superintending, and carrying out the arrangements necessary for the moves, camps, &c. Indeed, had a less efficient officer been on the staff, the regiment would have fared badly ; but, thanks to his strength of character and energy, things were managed, not in the spirit of red-tape, but practically and thoroughly. It has been remarked by those who have experienced both situations, that a cholera camp is more trying to the nerves than a battle-field.

Having returned to England on leave in 1873, Captain Stewart exchanged into the 3d Dragoon Guards. Although offered permanent employment on the staff of the Quartermaster-General's department in India, he considered that his future interests lay in another direction. In 1877 Stewart entered the Staff College, creating rather a sensation by bringing with him a four-in-hand team. While there, he was one of the foremost with the College drag-hounds, and was well known with Mr Garb's and the Queen's. After completing the two years' course, being then only a captain of cavalry, and having seen no active service, he volunteered for South Africa.

Stewart afterwards declared that the Zulu campaign was the hardest piece of work he ever did. He was on the eve of embarking for England, almost unnoticed, when Lord Wolseley telegraphed to stop him, and gave him the appointment of military secretary, in the place of Colonel Colley, who had been ordered to India. Stewart thus got his foot on the lowest rung of the ladder up which he was so rapidly to ascend to fame. In the Seco-

coeni campaign which followed, he discharged the very severe and heavy duties required of him with his accustomed energy, thereby receiving the well-merited approval of his chief, and afterwards his brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel—which recognition of services no man better deserved.

We next see Stewart on Majuba Hill with Sir G. Colley, in the spring of 1881. He was close to his chief when that gallant but unfortunate officer was shot dead, and evidently one of the last on that fatal hill, for he was taken prisoner. He afterwards spent an interesting time with the Boers, who treated him well, giving him the very best they had. Like all who shared in that disastrous fight, Stewart was unrecompensed for his hard service there.

After the Transvaal campaign he rejoined his regiment, and did duty with it in command of the detachment at Glasgow until early in 1882, when he was offered an aide-de-campship by Lord Spencer in Ireland. Here the Lord Lieutenant found scope for Colonel Stewart's great abilities in many other than the ordinary duties of an A.D.C.,—although for these no man could have been more fitted. His handsome expressive face and peculiar charm of manner, his active habits and bold riding, ensured his popularity with the Irish in the hunting-field as in the ball-room, and he was always a favourite in society ; but his capacity for higher and more intellectual work was not ignored, at a time when long heads were much required in Ireland. On account of his sound common-sense and rare tact, Stewart was specially fitted for diplomatic work of an important or delicate nature. He writes about this time from the

Viceregal Lodge, "We are very busy over here with one thing and another, and I drop in for all sorts of work—one day I am a policeman, and the next day a university reformer. This style of change suits my usual restlessness."

From this time Stewart's rise was very rapid. When selected for the Brigade-majorship of Cavalry in the expedition to Egypt in 1882, he was only a major in the 3d Dragoon Guards, and a brevet Lieutenant-Colonel in the army, having served in three campaigns, and been several times mentioned in despatches. He was present with General Drury Lowe's cavalry—latterly as Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General—during all the actions of that campaign, and in the splendid march of the cavalry on Cairo after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir. By this rapid march and vigorous pursuit the enemy was prevented from again rallying, the fruits of victory were reaped, Cairo taken, and the campaign practically ended. With the audacity, combined with shrewdness, which should ever be the leading characteristic of the *beau sabreur*, Stewart, by a clever disposition of his small force, deceived the garrison of Cairo—20,000 unbeaten regular troops—and demanded their instant surrender. Had they refused to capitulate, he could not for a moment have opposed the force against him with his tired-out cavalry. For these services Stewart was appointed A.D.C. to the Queen, made a Companion of the Bath, and promoted full Colonel.

Last year he was again called upon to serve his country: this time in the Soudan, under Sir General Graham, when he had the honour to command the cavalry brigade at the battles of El-Teb and Tamai.

At each of these engagements

the cavalry did effective and gallant service, although that miserable weapon, the regulation sabre, proved its worthlessness, and the troopers eventually armed themselves with the lances of the dead Arabs. At the fight at Tamai, Stewart, now commanding a cavalry brigade, proved a friend in need to his former chief and sporting ally, General Davis (to whom he had been adjutant in the old Indian days), by coming to his aid at a most critical moment, when Davis's square was partly broken and temporarily pressed back. Stewart cleverly and boldly dismounted his horsemen, and by their effective fire checked the wild rush of Arab fanatics, and enabled the brigade to rally.

Stewart's last campaign must be too "fresh in the minds of every one to need more than a few passing remarks.

Selected at Korti by Lord Wolseley for the command of a most arduous and dangerous enterprise, he hastened across the desert to Gakdul, a distance of nearly 100 miles, where was the nearest ample water-supply. Leaving his men there, he returned almost without rest, and again directly crossed the dreary waste with another contingent. This march of nearly 200 miles in less than six days is unparalleled in its character, camels being the only mode of conveyance for men, water, and supplies. It will rank for rapidity and endurance—although a short march with a small force—among the greatest historical marches on record. Very shortly after, starting from Gakdul, with his whole force now concentrated—about 1500 fighting men—he again struck across the desert, making for the wells of Abu Klea and the Nile. How he fought two successful battles—Abu Klea on the 17th January,

and Gubat on the 19th—against overwhelming numbers of the bravest fanatics, where defeat meant annihilation,—how he was struck down at the fight on the 19th by a wound which has since proved fatal,—these things are well known.

Stewart was not more remarkable for his bravery and intelligence as a soldier, than for his endearing qualities in private life. Those who had the advantage of his friendship recognised in him a strength of mind and geniality of temper which made his companionship a real pleasure and privilege. He was often and very aptly spoken of as “a long-headed man,” and he possessed in a remarkable degree the power of writing a good letter—of expressing himself clearly and concisely. Ever ready to help a friend in the hour of need, it was a common practice to resort to him for advice in matters of difficulty or delicacy, which was always given kindly and effectively. In that lamentable affair in connection with the death of the Prince Imperial, when Captain Carey was tried by court-martial, Stewart, who had been with him at the Staff College, assisted the prisoner with advice, suggested his line of defence, and helped him in his trouble. It cannot be supposed that this was done from any sympathy with Carey’s conduct, but from a chivalrous impulse which led him to stand by a fallen comrade who was helpless and friendless.

In his rapid rise in his profession Stewart owed nothing to private interest. It was in the ordinary course of soldiering that he first met Lord Wolseley at Rorke’s Drift, who, no doubt with that penetration for which he is re-

markable, recognised in him a most capable officer, not to be lost sight of in future campaigns.

It was not only on the field of battle, in all manly sports, and in private life, that Stewart was ever prominent. He became, while at the Staff College, a member of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, and of late years, between his campaigns, was often to be met during the law terms eating his dinners at the Inner Temple Hall. He had finished keeping his terms, but had not been called to the Bar, when he quitted England for the last time.

Twenty-two years have elapsed since the writer of this feeble tribute to his memory first met Herbert Stewart, and he had the privilege of his intimate friendship during ten years. He regrets that he does not possess the ready pen of his lamented friend, wherewith to express his sorrow at the loss of such a comrade.

To men who knew him best, Stewart’s death creates a real and irreparable blank. That bright cheery nature and charm of manner are seldom found combined in the same man with high intellectual powers, rare courage, and quiet determination. Whilst his companions in arms lament him as a true friend and dear brother, the army he adorned mourns him as a brilliant and dashing soldier, and a kind and thoughtful commanding officer; and the public whom he so faithfully served laments him as a rising servant, who had latterly become in their eyes the type of a born cavalry leader.

It must be some consolation to his friends and dear ones to have marked how, in these last scenes, not only they, but the whole nation, from her Most Gracious Majesty to the meanest of her subjects, watched with intense pride,

interest, and anxiety, every gallant forward step in the desert, and seemed to be moved to the heart by the stirring and pathetic tale.

Herbert Stewart was only forty-one, full of life and energy, and zeal for his glorious profession. To think of him struck down at the supreme moment when he had achieved that fame which had been his dream throughout his career; suddenly taken from the fulness of a busy life, and the intense anxiety of his most difficult and responsible task; the sudden quietness of inaction after the storm;—to picture the young general stretched on the bed of suffering on board Gordon's steamer on the Nile; afterwards tenderly carried back by his men through the long and dangerous return marches across the desert, the convey of wounded fighting its way through the enemy; his thoughts, feelings, regrets, his bitter disappointments,—to think of these things is enough to draw tears from the eyes of strong men. Our gallant soldier, we can believe, encountered them with calmness and fortitude. Then the last scene of all at Gakdul—touchingly told by the telegram sent home by an officer of his staff:—

"We buried him in the little British graveyard near the Gakdul Wells. It was the most impressive scene any one ever went through. We formed a procession in the valley, headed by the firing-party, and the band of the Royal-Sussex. Colonel Talbot read

the burial service. I looked up once. It is no exaggeration to say that every one round the spot had utterly broken down. I have lost the kindest, truest friend man ever had—and England, I honestly believe, one of her best officers.

"The 19th Hussars made a forced march to try to be in time for the funeral, but arrived too late. This morning they came and asked to be allowed to do the stone-work round the grave, and have been working all day."

This is a touching testimony to the affection and respect in which he was held by his men.

Writing from Gakdul on February 20, the war correspondent of the 'Daily Telegraph' says: "Stewart was much beloved by all who enjoyed his acquaintance, and any hour of the day you may see one or more of his friends sorrowfully regarding his grave."

His was a grand life, nobly ended; and although his body lies in a soldier's grave in the desert by the wells of Gakdul, his cherished memory and heroic example still remain with us.

"Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;

But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life."

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

EPIDEMICS AND ALCOHOL.

IF, O reader, you have known what it is to pass years in a far-away land, of which the climate and the products are very different from those familiar to us here, you probably are acquainted also with the agreeable feeling produced by recognising some day, here on British soil, a plant, an animal; or a fruit, which you had thought to be kept pretty strictly to the climes where you had once been straying. You are pleased at sight of a once familiar object now for long out of reach and sight, and you are pleased to think that the object is one of which you have intimate knowledge, while most of your friends, probably, require much explanation as to its nature and uses. A pleasure of this kind may greet you on any day. There is scarcely anything, from anywhere, which may not find its way into London now. Time was when men went to certain places to obtain certain things : Quin went to Plymouth to eat John-dories ; canvas-backed ducks could only be tasted by crossing the Atlantic ; in Jamaica only could the perfect land-crab be enjoyed. But sit still now, have a little patience, and all these things—yea, even the incomparable land-crab—will come to you.

To-day I have had on my table some fairly good mangoes. Until to-day I had not eaten one for more years than I like to talk about ; but I have talked a good deal about the fruit, declared it to be a specimen very inferior to some of which I once lived in the daily enjoyment, but nevertheless commended it to attention, and predicted that we should have it of

superior quality anon. I think I was justified in this prediction by observation of the ever-increasing quantity and variety of foreign fruits which arrive at our markets. To say nothing more of fruits that are at present rare, those which we have long appreciated now come from a distance at a reduced price, so that there can be very general enjoyment of them. Pine-apples and grapes, which used to be supplied to us from English hothouses at very high prices, can now be enjoyed by the multitude ; and, these being very wholesome as well as very grateful fruits, the indulgence to our palates is obtained without the sacrifice of any sanitary principle. Obtained, that is to say, in ordinary seasons without any sacrifice ; but I fear that if the cholera had come within a measurable distance of us last summer, the good supply of fruit would have been held to be a misfortune. I rather think it is usual for European doctors to altogether prohibit the consumption of fruit during a visitation ; and we shall have rather a tantalising time whenever the fell disease may again make its way to our shores.

I am thankful to say that my experience of cholera-times is not very extensive. No doubt, when the dreadful disease is actually among an English community, they will be as much scared and horrified as denizens of any other country ; but I do not think the apprehension of its appearance creates even proper alarm and caution. As a proof of this, I shall mention a commotion which I know to have occurred some years ago in a small

English borough, at a time when it might have been expected that a sense of common danger would have suppressed for the time class jealousies. Up to the date of the event to which reference is made, the little town had itself escaped the epidemic, which, however, was making considerable havoc in several places not very distant. One day a woman, a tramp, or a person not much above the level of a tramp, came to the borough, was taken ill there in a mean lodging-house, and speedily died. It was soon ascertained that she had come from a town where Asiatic cholera had established itself, and the doctors affirmed that she had died of that disease.

Now the local authorities were, to do them justice, quite on the alert. Immediately after the death occurred, the mayor and corporation met in their hall and deliberated on the situation. To carry the body from the lodging-house where it lay to the churchyard would have involved the taking it through the principal streets. Even though some of the streets might have been avoided by using a circuitous route, the churchyard could not be reached without passing through one or two streets—and the old burial-ground was dangerously near to a large number of houses. Medical opinion was decidedly against burying the woman in the churchyard; and happily, as it seemed, there was an alternative to that proceeding, for there was an enclosed piece of ground about half a mile off, and quite without the town, on which had formerly stood a chapel, and where a tower was yet standing. This piece of ground was consecrated, and it could be reached from the lodging-house without traversing more than a very small part of one of the streets.

The town council therefore thought that they had in every way taken prudent and reasonable order when they decreed that the grave should be dug in the piece of ground near the tower, and that the funeral should take its way thither, where all rites would be duly performed. It was lucky, as they thought, that this consecrated area was available; the safety of the living could be regarded without disrespect to the dead; the burgesses thought that they had discreetly settled an unexpected and menacing difficulty.

If, however, they thought that they were to receive the thanks of the community, they were grievously deceived. No sooner was it known that the burial was to take place near the old tower, than the lower orders of people, putting aside all concern about the cholera, grew vastly excited at the thought of carrying the body to this ground, which had for long been unused for interments. They said that, if it had been a well-to-do citizen that had so died instead of a friendless stranger, no authority would for a moment have thought of ordering the burial to be effected elsewhere than in the churchyard. They collected in angry groups about the streets (it was on a Sunday), and ultimately gathered in an immense mob about the house where the body was lying, declaring that the burial should be in the churchyard, and nowhere else.

The disappointed magistrates and councillors, when they understood how ill their arrangements had been received by a large part of the community, repaired to the scene of tumult, and endeavoured to convince the populace that what had been ordered was for the common good of all, high and low—that the danger was a very serious one—and that, as good citizens, all

were bound to assist in removing to a distance as speedily as possible the infectious remains. But they could scarcely obtain a hearing. Fifty orators were ready from among the crowd to overbear them, and to assert in no gentle terms that they (the authorities) would not have acted as they had done if the deceased had been one of their own relations or order. They did not care a straw (so they said) about the danger, which could not be greater from a poor person's corpse than from a rich one's; they would allow no burying in a strange ground—that might be depended on; and therefore the authorities, if they were wise, would lose no time in preparing a grave in the churchyard, and ordering the funeral to take place there.

Things continued in this way for several hours. No actual violence had occurred, but there was great excitement. The woman still lay unburied. The magistrates did not choose to rescind or modify their decree; and the populace still declared that the funeral, as decreed, should not take place. Evening had come, and it was considered most important that the interment should take place at once. I should mention that the police force of the little borough was very meagre, and quite unable to cope with such a mob as was filling the streets.

At this conjuncture whispers were passed about that troops had been demanded from the nearest garrison town, and that a couple of regiments would be present before morning to enforce the magistrates' orders. There is some reason, however, to doubt the truth of these whispers, because the conduct of the authorities showed that they had by no means lost faith in themselves as yet. They announced that the state of the town

was so unruly that it was necessary for them to retire once more to their hall to consult as to what the next move must be. They begged that while they should be deliberating, the people would consider the great danger in which the whole town was placed by this mutiny, and the scandal incurred by persisting in it.

It was observed by the more reasonable of those who were mixed in the assembly, that the crowd, when thus left to itself by the magistrates, became of a sudden somewhat calmer. It had no longer champions of the law to wrangle with it, so the fire declined from lack of fuel: and it did not appear to have any clear ideas of action; it was only an obstructive mob without leaders—indeed every body capable of taking a lead was on the side of the law. So, although the aspect of things had not changed much, there seemed to be a general disposition to wait and see what the authorities would do next.

As I have heard the tale told, the town council, when it reassembled in guild-hall, did not exhibit the helplessness which it is customary to expect from civic bodies when called upon to deal with unwonted difficulties. There were one or two burgesses who wiped their heads, said the responsibility was very serious indeed, and hinted that it would be better to let the people have their way. A small section followed a fiery little man with red hair who was all for gunpowder. "Have troops here," counselled this section, "with the least possible delay. Read the Riot Act. After that, if any offer opposition to the law, let the military deal with 'em." But the mayor and his deputy, supported by the town-clerk, offered advice which was not begotten

of fright, or of belief in the riding down, gagging, and pinioning method. His worship said that there had not been rioting so far ; it was by no means certain that they might not yet prevail with the people to let the law have way ; and that they were not by a long way near the end of their home resources. He then propounded a scheme of action, which, after a short discussion, was substantially adopted.

The municipal body now returned to the neighborhood of the lodging-house, taking with them this time their crier in his robes and with his wand of office. As the magistrates entered among the crowd, the crier turned suddenly to a respectable tradesman who was watching the proceedings, called upon him in the sovereign's name to aid in upholding the law, and told him that the mayor desired him to take the oath as a special constable, which he would refuse to do at his peril. The tradesman, who was quite on the side of order, took the required oath at once. Another decent man was then sworn in, and then another. Then the crier came upon one of the noisy malcontents, and required him to be sworn. The fellow refused at first ; but the mayor reminded him that he did so at his peril—and these appeared to him, as Pistol's rant did to Mrs. Quickly, to be very bitter words. Moreover, he had seen more substantial persons than himself comply with similar demands ; he was taken aback ; he received the book and took the oath.

The effect of these proceedings was very satisfactory. When the noisy rogue suffered himself to be sworn, and the murmur ran about, "You must ; you can't refuse ; it's jail and £50 penalty,"—a great many leading obstructionists, who

did not fancy being enlisted as agents of the law, made retreat as quietly as possible, and repaired to their own houses. The swearing, however, went on among the many that remained on the ground, until twenty or thirty special constables had been made. The crowd hardly knew what to make of this move, and stood quiet and somewhat astonished, wondering what would happen next.

What did happen was that the mayor, who was now listened to more patiently than before, said a few soothing words to the assemblage. He told them that he fancied their dissatisfaction to have arisen from a belief that the authorities were inclined to treat the deceased slightly because she was an indigent person. This was very far from the fact. They had acted solely from considerations of public safety, and by no means with an intention to respect persons. In proof whereof, he was glad to tell them that the corporation had ordered the hearse (there was but one in the town, and that but rarely in request) to bear the body to the grave ; also, that some of the aldermen and council would follow as mourners, so that no mark of respect might be wanting.

As he finished speaking, the plumes of the hearse came into view, as the vehicle was driven up the street. The most refractory of the mob had, as I said, slunk away for fear of being made special constables. There was nobody to lead an opposition ; the honest mayor had all his own way ; and a cheer even greeted the hearse as it drew up at the door of the lodging-house. The special constables formed two lines from the house door to the hearse, and between them the body was brought out by the workman who made the coffin, boxed up for its last jour-

ney, and driven off to the old tower (followed, as was promised, by some of the corporation), and there decorously interred.

So ended the tumult. There was not another case of cholera in the healthy old borough ; and the little *émeute* soon ceased to be a prominent topic of conversation. If the inhabitants generally of that borough were not to be put from their domestic jealousies by fear of disease, I am able to state that one individual could be quite alive to the danger of an epidemic. This was proved at a time when, not cholera, but typhus fever was the scare. An old lady of the place having heard that typhus was in the neighbourhood, declared that she would take it and die of it. She had not the faith of her own prediction that would have made her passively await its fulfilment, but, hopeless as she declared her case to be, made vigorous efforts to turn the fate aside. Being a person of some means, she had not much difficulty in taking her measures. She hired a house several miles in the country, shut herself therein with one servant, and established a stringent system of interdicting communication, except of the most sparing and necessary kind. Her quarantine was kept up for a week or two ; but alas ! by the end of that time there was an end of precaution, for she had died of typhus. It was remarkable that there was not another case of the disease for many miles round her.

If I have not a very intimate acquaintance with cholera, I cannot say the same of yellow fever, for of this last I have witnessed the ravages in different parts of the world ; I have also felt its grip. It is a question not yet, as I think, decided, whether yellow fever is conveyed by infection or

not. Certain it is that some persons believe it to be so ; and I remember a diabolical attempt to introduce it into a healthy region by means of infected clothing. It happened at Bermuda during the period when North and South were flying at each other's throats in the American States, and when, by reason of the blockade-running, a good many Southerners were collected in the Bermuda group. There had been a bad outbreak of yellow fever while the war was being waged ; and before the disease had quite subsided, a discovery was made of a box, the passage of which had been provided for to the Northern States so that it might arrive in the hottest part of summer. It was found to contain the bedclothes and body-linen (as was evident from the condition of the articles) of persons who had been afflicted with the epidemic. The intention, no doubt, was to introduce and spread the pestilence in the Northern towns and districts. I quite forget how the attempt was first brought to light ; but very little doubt was at the time entertained that it was deliberately planned, and was to have been mercilessly carried out.

It is not uncommon belief that the free use of intoxicating liquors, so common in warm climates, renders one very susceptible of the fever, and takes largely from the chances of recovery if the disease be once induced. In its general, unmodified form, this belief is certainly incorrect ; conditionally, it is probably true. As facts in support of my assertions I adduce : 1st, That in the visitation at Bermuda to which I have referred, several men known to be steady and hard drinkers, enjoyed complete immunity from the attacks of fever ; 2d, That, in the same epidemic, occasional inebriates — men who

every now and then went in for a "burst up," and then returned to steady habits for a while—hardly ever escaped, and hardly ever recovered.

The habitual toppers not only did not take the fever, but they seemed to have an instinctive knowledge that they were quite safe from it. Not one of them evinced the least apprehension when every one else was panic-stricken; not one of them condescended to make the slightest alteration in his copious and fiery potations. They fearlessly performed for the sick and dead offices which sober men were not very eager about undertaking; and they seemed rather proud that a time had arrived when they became of some importance, for ordinarily they were reputed, and treated as, besotted, useless rascals. It is an unpleasant truth for the blue-ribbons, but it seems to be a truth nevertheless, that to keep well saturated with alcohol is a safeguard against yellow-fever.

There is no great difficulty in the way of understanding why men given to occasional fits of excess should fare badly in a time of pestilence. They weakened their powers of repelling or resisting disease without attaining that thoroughly cured condition which could set fever at defiance. And they had rather a fatal time of it.

As to the general mass of society, it was hard to name any particular class which escaped attack, or any which seemed especially open to it. Strong men were stricken and succumbed; delicate men escaped or recovered. Almost every one who had not been a patient in previous visitations suffered now. Convalescence was generally tedious; but after a few months, all souvenirs of the fever in the shape of bodily ailments disappeared. I have reason to believe that scientific opinion

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is much divided as to the origin of, and the best method of dealing with, this pestilence. There are a few instances on record—I know of two myself—of patients having recovered after having had black-vomit, which is looked upon as a fatal occurrence. As to the tendency of reckless habits to induce or to intensify the diseases incidental to warm climates, I remember to have heard it said by a military surgeon who had been long in Jamaica, that he thought the intemperate habits of soldiers warded off as much disease as they induced. Soldiers commit such gross errors as to eating unwholesome things, and as to going into and even sleeping in marshes, thickets, and other places known to be dangerous to health, that the excitement of alcohol probably often saves them from the ill effects of poisons. The mention of thickets reminds me of a case which I once knew of, where a soldier, sleeping in the bush, drew a fly of some sort into his nostrils, which bred with great rapidity in his head. The doctors knew what was wrong, but were altogether unable to check the progress of the insects into his brain, by penetrating to which they killed him in great agony.

We are apt to connect intemperate habits with hot climates, but "we never need leave our own dear isle" for some pretty examples of what may be done in the way of consuming alcohol. As I have touched on the subject of hard drinking abroad, I will now give two examples (which I believe to be quite genuine) of home achievements. The hero of the first was an old yeoman whose first name was Steeve; his surname I need not mention. Old Steeve was at work one day, fork in hand, in a field overlooking a

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lane. Along the lane came, trotting on his pony, a county member who had lately been re-elected, and in whose favour old Steeve always recorded a vote. Seeing and recognising his faithful constituent, the legislator drew his bridle, inquired after the yeoman's health, remarked that it was a gloomy day, and, having executed this piece of politeness, was about to trot on, when Steeve prolonged the parley.

"Measter Member."

"Well, Mr J——?"

"I reckon 'tis more'n thirty year that I have a-voted for you and your brether."

"I think it must be, Mr J——; and very highly flattered my family feels by your steady support, I assure you. I'm proud of your good opinion."

"Like enough you be, sir. But do you know that in all that long time I can't recollect that I ever drink'd a glass at your expense, except to election times, when everybody could wet their clay? Now that's hardly reasonable."

"I think you must be mistaken," answered the member. "I don't generally neglect my friends, especially such stanch friends as you; but, mistaken or not, I shall be very glad if you think proper to drink my health some evening soon at The Rising Sun."

"Thank 'ee, sir. Perhaps you'll be so good as to let 'em know that they may sarve me."

"I will. I'm going by there now; and I won't forget to tell the landlord that he's to serve you with as much as you wish to take the first night you go down."

"That's honourable, sir. Good day."

About a week after this, the member, riding in that direction again, stopped at The Rising Sun, learned that old Steeve had "been

and had his drop," and inquired what was to pay. A note was handed to him making him debtor to the establishment by 37 glasses of grog served to Mr Steeve J——. The member was indignant.

"You've had plenty of my money," he said, "at this Rising Sun. There was no need of your laying it on in this way. I didn't want to stint the old man, and I told you so. But I didn't think you'd have taken this advantage."

"No advantage had been took, sir," the landlord replied. "That's the fair and honest account of what old Steeve drank."

"Well; you'll allow me to ask him about it before I settle?"

"Sartainly, sir; and you'll find all correct."

So the debtor rode off towards old Steeve's acres, and found the yeoman much in the same spot, and occupied much in the same way, as at their former meeting.

"Mornin', measter," said Steeve, smiling benignantly.

"Good morning, Mr J——. Glad to see you all right and at work."

"Me! Lord bless 'ee, I am always right and hearty, I be! Much obliged for your little treat, sir. I enjoyed that drop, I did."

"It's a satisfaction if it made you happy; but, I say, Mr Steeve, I didn't think that, when I gave you entire liberty for your own entertainment, you'd have gone and treated half the parish at my expense."

"Me, sir? Me treat the parish at your honour's expense? No: that's a thing old Steeve 'ud scorn to do. Whoever says he got a thimbleful by my means out of your honour is a lying varmint, and if you'll gi' me his name I'll tell'n so, whoever he may be."

'Then it must be as I suspected

at first; the people at the inn have been down on me."

"What have they charged your honour, if I may ax?"

"Rather tell me first, Mr. J—, how many glasses I ought to pay for. We'll soon see then who has been trying it on me."

"Certainly, measter," answered Steeve, and he scratched his head as if in calculation. Then, after the pause, he added, "I can't recollect noan after the zix-and-thirtieth."

Whereupon his representative

said he thought he would pay the score without further taxing.

The next example was in a much higher walk of life—a gallant admiral who at his London club used to consume nightly eleven tumblers of whisky-toddy. On a certain day he learned that he had been appointed to an important command, and that evening, in honour of the event, he increased his whack by ten tumblers, making it twenty-one tumblers all told.

AN ANECDOTE—SCIENCE VERSUS FICTION.

Perhaps I have said too much about excessive drinking, which, as we may fairly hope, is becoming unpopular. If so, I will try to compensate for the error by saying something about another admiral who was certainly open to no reproach on the score of self-indulgence, but noted for good and gallant service, of which he bore the marks on his person. This fine old sailor, having his flag flying on board a line-of-battle ship in the West Indies, was taking the general officer then commanding the land forces round the islands, that he might pleasantly and rapidly visit the different stations of his command. As they were passing the island of St Lucia, the admiral pointed to a small sugar-loaf-shaped rock close to it, named Pigeon Island, and said,—“That barren-looking cone will always have an interest for me; because, insignificant as it is, it was the scene of my first real separate responsibility.” On being asked what the position was to which he alluded, he went on to say: “I am speaking of the day when we took the island—long enough ago now. I was a very small actor in the affair; but they

considered it necessary to occupy Pigeon Island, and they had not at first troops immediately disposable to send thither. The consequence was, that I, with two or three boats’ crews, was ordered to land there and hold the rock until I should be relieved of my charge by a military officer. Proud enough I was of my position. I was governor of an island for several hours. At length my government came to an end; for an ensign with a party came to relieve me. So I handed over my government to Mr Somebody-or-other—I haven’t the least recollection of his name or regiment—and retired once more into very subordinate life.”

Whereupon the general, who had been listening to the story with much interest, sprang to his feet, brought his right hand down with emphasis on his left, and exclaimed—

“And, by G—, I was the man who came and relieved you!”

The remarkable thing was, that these two chiefs, who had now grown old and grey in the service, had never again seen each other since, as lads, they hastily exchanged duties, until they came together as commanders—and that,

on this occasion of their second meeting, they should pass the scene of their first. Between the two meetings, each of them had served with much distinction in different parts of the world. It so chanced that I was on the deck of the flag-ship when the scene which I have described took place.

As I think of that voyage, I am impressed by the much closer acquaintance which we have formed with St Lucia, and indeed with the West Indies in general, since those days—which, after all, are not so long ago. The snakes, the negroes, the flying-fish, and the sharks, used to be themes on which travellers could dilate for the amusement of their home-tarrying friends; but now it is so easy and so short an expedition for a man to go and see that region for himself, and so many have seen and declared its wonders, that life in the Gulf of Mexico is as well comprehended at our firesides as life in Kensington. One must go to Central Africa or to the interior of Tartary who wants to bring home anything fresh. The progress of science and art, which enables us thus to bring the ends of the earth together, is no doubt, on the whole, a great gain to humanity; but there are losses too, which must count as serious offsets. How are mankind ever to be compensated for the ignorance and darkness out of which glimmered the shadowy forms, the impossible adventures, the occult powers, the monsters animate and inanimate, of sovereign fiction, the materials of ever-to-be-wept romance? I might parody Pistol's fustian, and say, "Come we to plain facts here, and are charmed fables nothing?" Alas, alas! advancement will be dearly paid for if it is to cost us our mystery and our myths!

Of all the countries of the earth,

Egypt was, perhaps, the most mystic and most legendary. Even while we breathe to-day, our public servants, civil and military, and our press, are sedulously at work secularising Egypt; so that the time cannot be far distant when the Pyramid's will be known as well as Paul's—when the shoe-brigade, while awaiting customers, will season their discourse with slang down from the Labyrinth, and tame crocodiles will waddle at the heels of butchers' lads. These, however, are the material, real wonders of the land: cannot all the imaginary spells of it remain as great as ever, though the gross palpable objects become intimately known?" I say, No. The sanctity of the Nile has passed away, now that that "exulting and abounding river" can be profaned by groups of personally conducted Cockneys from its mouths to its ruthlessly exposed source—now that its nakedness has been uncovered, and the fountain which had been kept secret since the foundation of the world revealed. The Thebes in whose gates a "a 'undred 'Arrys" daily imbibe their Bass—must it not be commonplace and vulgar as Brummagen itself? Even the memory of Cleopatra descends to the lowest level of interest since the scenes in which she bloomed and charmed became common tracks. Familiarity and awe cannot away together; gnomes and afrites, marvels and dreams, flee before accurate topography and everyday intimacy. Unfortunately, the science which is turning Egypt and other strongholds of fable into material for facts and figures, and forbids them any longer to furnish such stuff as dreams are made of, does not take us much nearer to an even obscure acquaintance with life in Jupiter and Saturn, so that it gives us no compensation for the

joys which it takes away. If it would only land a few enterprising explorers in the moon, and bring them back to us after a sojourn there, imagination might transfer her regard to the satellite, and find there the pictures which she may no longer import from corners of the earth. But we are to have no twilight region henceforth—nothing between prosaic accuracy and blank ignorance.

On reading over what I wrote just now about familiarity operating to the abatement of awe, I am reminded of how the country people often lose their regard for the solemnity of an oath. This may arise from the irreverent administration of oaths in justice-rooms, or from the profane swearing concerning unimportant matters which

is too common among them. I recollect the case of one old witness in an assize court, who evidently did not consider the oath which he had just sworn to be a sufficient security that he would speak the truth; for, as counsel commenced to examine him, he turned to the judge, at the same time raising his clasped hands, and saying—

“My lord, do you see my two hands?”

“What does this mean?” said the judge. “Yes, I see your hands; but why don’t you attend to the gentleman’s question?”

“Well, my lord judge; what I’ve got to say is this: I hope those hands may never unclasp [*i.e.*, unfasten] no more, if I don’t tell the whole truth. I wouldn’t say that to a lie.”

PRICES OF FOOD—DITTO OF MEN.

Rustic simplicity is fast disappearing, now that communication is so easy, and men of all classes contrive to see a little of the world. And, unfortunately, the same transport which can move men about, moves also food and other necessities, much of which have greatly risen in price since they can be so easily transferred. Such fish as that old witness whom I mentioned consumed, would cost now four times what he paid for it, because it can be taken to the London markets. Vegetables also have become very dear to this generation, and I think many of the peasants would say they had gained but little by the march of improvement.

It is a hard thing that, with employment so precarious as it is, and with wages so low, provisions should be high-priced in all the great towns. Butcher’s-meat, poultry, fish, and bread are cer-

tainly much dearer than they ought to be. If graziers, fishermen, and farmers received large payments for these commodities, it might be supposed that the cost of breeding, taking, or growing them was so great that only a long price could remunerate those who occupy themselves therewith. But it is notorious that the first vendors of them get by no means large profits for their pains, although the consumers—the retail buyers—have to pay exorbitantly. The great profits, no doubt, go into the pockets of butchers, bakers, poulterers, and fishmongers, and probably of other middlemen who stand between the eater and the producer. The rules of the political economists seem to be at fault here, and might fairly be threatened with banishment to Jupiter or Saturn; for spite of the immense commerce in these necessities of life, competition does

not aid the consumer at all. Rather there is no healthy competition, for the retail sellers are able to combine and overbear all attempts to offer the goods at a lower rate. It was for a time hoped that the co-operative societies might prevail to break the power of what are really great conspiracies against the interest of the public; but they have hitherto accomplished little as regards fresh provisions.

The evil is one very difficult to contend with, notwithstanding that we are able to see pretty clearly where the unsound place is. Catches of fish are parted with by the toilers of the sea for extremely moderate considerations; foreign grain and foreign carcasses are brought hither and sold at decidedly cheap rates,—and yet the buyer for his own table finds his retail purchase singularly dear. Now that these facts are known, it is probable that in time we may see the obstacles to fair dealing in the food of the people cleared away. So far, even though they *are* known, the facts obtain much less attention than they deserve. Compare the protests made by the public against the conspirators who keep up the retail prices of food, with the indignation which clamours so loudly if one only hints at such a thing as a protective duty; and yet the duty would enhance the price very far less than these combinations do. The duties are made odious to serve political objects; but it benefits no party to denounce the action of middlemen and retailers, and so their overthrow is left to time. Time, probably, will not fail us. After long waiting the public has at length had some right done it in the article of household fuel, and this gives ground for hope that right will some day triumph in respect of provisions.

Nothing could look more hopeless than the high price of household coal did in the south of England a few years ago. Now it has become, rather suddenly, more moderate—the means having been found, after long waiting, of outflanking the destructive army of middlemen, and of bringing the colliery owner and the consumer into direct relation. An intermediate business, which for long enriched a few tradesmen, has been, or soon will be, eliminated; on the other hand, the population at large experience a marked relief in regard to an indispensable commodity. To the poor in winter, the boon of moderately priced coal must be inexpressibly welcome.

The word *price* has formed a link between ideas which, at first view, have little in common. I pass from the price of commodities to the price of men.

What Walpole said about every man having his price, seems to be in these days applicable to persons in the employ of the State, who are intrusted with information or documents which it is their duty to keep secret. Every now and then occasions come about when it is worth the while of certain persons to pay highly for such information or documents, in order that they may make the same public; and it too often happens that public servants who have not the excuse of necessity or low wages to plead, yield to the temptation of a heavy bribe. It is no unusual thing for us to read in print some of the proceedings of Councils and Committees, which every one officially aware of them has been bound to keep secret: this remark applies to times when such proceedings may not be the subjects of great public curiosity or interest. But again, there are times when very much anxiety is felt concern-

ing secret documents or opinions, when it is most inconvenient (to use a moderate word) to Cabinets or Councils that their proceedings should be known, and yet when means can be found of overcoming somebody's honour, honesty, or sense of duty, and of obtaining surreptitiously what official prescription has anxiously endeavoured to veil from public view.

I am led to these reflections by the premature disclosure, which occurred last autumn, of the heads of a Redistribution Bill which had been drawn up by a committee of the Cabinet. But I soon look back to the earlier betrayal of the proceedings of the Berlin Conference in 1878. And then I return still farther into the past, and think of the mysterious publication (in 1848, as I think) of the letter addressed by the first Duke of Wellington to Sir John Burgoyne, then Inspector-General of Fortifications, on the subject of our defences. Burgoyne was the last man in the world to make an improper use of a public document; and it may be assumed, without argument, that he had no idea that the document was in dishonest hands, until after it was in anybody's hands who was willing to pay sixpence for it. He probably could not avoid communicating to the Master-General of the Ordnance and others that he had received such a letter. Some artful person, by theft or cunning, got possession of the paper, copied it, and sold the copy to a newspaper. The story current was, that a lady of some notoriety, by gross misrepresentation, and by a solemn promise that no improper use should be made of it, obtained possession of the letter for an hour from a member of Burgoyne's family, who took it from his desk. One may imagine the state of mind of Sir John when he had to go to

the Duke, who had always thought highly of him, and to try to make his peace after such an unhappy occurrence. "Take damned good care you never let another letter of mine to you find its way into print!" were said to have been his Grace's words which ended the interview.

The Berlin Treaty disclosure was known to have been made by a temporarily employed clerk in the English Foreign Office. It seems to be a sad reproach to us of the nineteenth century, that we cannot secure the inviolability of our State papers and transactions. Richelieu, Fredericks, Metternichs, could avoid such exposure, to say nothing of the older Cabinets of the Escorial under Philip II., or of Venice in the days of our Tudor sovereigns. Yet we moderns, in the great age of invention, with all appliances and means at our disposal, cannot guard ourselves against the curious who will pay. Probably our inability in this respect may be traced to the manner of making Government appointments, to which our parliamentary system forces us. Had our Ministers the power of arbitrarily appointing and dismissing the secretaries, clerks, and others in their departments, they might find means of keeping these assistants faithful to their trusts. But with the mode of appointment now in fashion, and with the difficulties that lie in the way of getting rid of a public servant though he may be grievously suspected, it can hardly be but that affairs of State are now and then confided to *employés* who prove to be corruptible.

If the same kind of treachery was not complained of in earlier days, that probably was because there was then no ready market for stolen papers. That there were always weak natures ready to sac-

rifice duty for pelf, I am afraid we have only too much warrant for saying. In old days it was a very lucrative commission to bring home a freight of specie from abroad. The senders of such valuable cargo were always especially glad if it could be confided to the captain of a man-of-war. Hence at those foreign stations whence we received the precious metals, there was always a chance of a captain being sent to England with a treasure in the hold of his ship, for conveying which he would receive very substantial reward. When this could be done in due order—that is to say, when the captain could take his rich freight by command of his superior—he was simply a fortunate individual. But such things used to be known as captains intriguing to get the offer of bullion freights; and then, forgetful of their duty and honour, leaving their stations without orders or

permission, and not caring for the dereliction of their duty as long as they could secure the dues for transporting the freight. Of course any man so acting had to face the decision of a court-martial on his conduct. But, unfortunately, the gain to be made by one voyage was sometimes so great as to tempt a commander to risk his commission to secure it. I remember an old captain who had done this, and contrived to escape punishment for his act. Unless he was most unwarrantably misrepresented, he used to be fond of bragging to his familiars of this achievement, and of saying—"You see I put my commission in one hand and the freight-money in the other, and found the latter a devilish deal the better worth having of the two." Such venality in a post-captain was quite as bad as any traffic in documents of which we have had to complain in later days.

MEN ABOVE PRICE.

To turn now from men who not only had their price, but who did not scruple to ticket themselves as open to a bid, it is pleasant to be reminded of one whose conscience was of a far severer order. Only a very few months since, it was notified to English-speaking men that Samuel Johnson had been dead a hundred years; and there was a proposal to mark the epoch by pilgrimages to Lichfield and commemorative ceremonies. The public did not, I think, incline very seriously to the demonstration; and probably those who best know how to value Johnson see no reason to regret that this was the case. For centenaries are becoming somewhat vulgar tributes, and our sturdy moralist still commands from his countrymen a

respect which would scarcely sort well with processions and spectacles. Had he left behind him simply the fame of a great author, there might have been something fitting in acting to enthusiastic audiences his tragedy, with Miss Ellen Terry for Irene, and an exceptionally powerful cast—in presenting the London of 120 years ago—in elaborating tableaux from the 'Prince of Abyssinia'; but the Johnson whom we revere to-day is the sage far more than the author. Our great-grandfathers and grandfathers did, I truly believe, regard the sonorous Doctor as a mighty leader in all the most majestic modes of letters. His drama, his didactic pieces, his essays, his biographies, and above all these, perhaps, his 'Rasselas,' were

considered to represent extraordinarily high flights of genius; but is it slander to say now that, except the celebrated Dictionary, hardly one of his volumes is ever moved from the shelf? I can remember having his "classic" tale put into my hand when I was a lad, as a sublime composition—a model of style and of construction, and a hive of wisdom; but I do not think I at that time was enticed far beyond the initial sentence wherein the drum is beat to call the audience together. How many of his lines do we ever hear quoted to-day? Perhaps the name at which the world grew pale: I can remember no more. While a man might be presented with a guinea for every leaf of the 'Rambler' or 'Idler' which he has turned, and yet not be exceeding rich!

No; it is the social and conversational Doctor, the brave, true-hearted man, the denouncer of vice and profaneness—who could be neighbour to the poor and forsaken, who could stun pretenders with a concentrated sentence—the simple-living conscientious Colossus, to whom we look back with affectionate respect. Great gatherings and special observances would not create an appreciation of Johnson's great qualities if we had it not; and as fortunately we have it, and have retained it but little impaired for a hundred years, it is itself the best witness to his merit to which we can point. Being dead he yet speaketh, as Abel does. With commanding intellect, great acquirements, and many infirmities of both body and mind, he not ineffectually endeavoured to live agreeably to his high profession: his life, private and social, has been exhibited and sifted as few lives have been; he is seen to have been in the main firm, honest, and true, with many failings, especially

in small things, but free from grievous blot of any kind. Without birth or connections, without wealth or even competence, with nature in many ways against him, Johnson by force of character wrought for himself a dictatorship to which the well-born, the rich, the gifted, and the great submitted. A grand figure truly! but we have him effectually enshrined in the memory and sentiment of the nation. There is no need of going to Lichfield.

As I have been tracing the sentences immediately foregoing, it was impossible almost but that there should steal into my mind thought of a distinguished contemporary and friend of Johnson, who, in many respects, is antithetical to him. Dr Goldsmith deserves, and has found, a warm place in the hearts of prosperity; but it is not his character, it is his sweet and pleasant writings for which we cherish his memory. His pen wound its way into the affections of men, charmed their ears, delighted their imaginations. He did not tower above them like Johnson; his voice came from among them, giving shape to their thoughts, articulating their cries, showing them to themselves in kindly groupings. How, being to the eye of his fellows what he appeared, he could give forth the utterances which delighted them, which delight us, and which will delight our posterity for generations, is one of the mysteries which for ever are confounding the world. Immensely inferior as he was to Johnson as a man, as a writer he left him far behind. Johnson's works (the Dictionary again excepted) are kept alive through our liking of their author; but it is not so with "Sweet Auburn" or "The Primroses." *They* have immortalised Goldsmith; he did nothing for

them except bring them into the world. "A word in due season, how good is it!" though a true proverb, might be capped with one far more striking—viz., a few words well chosen, and chanted in the right key, how they stir men's minds and compel their sympathies!

The music, pictures, and large charity of "The Deserted Village" were touches on the springs of feeling by a master-hand; yet one may fairly doubt whether the master was wholly conscious of the power that was in him. On that and on 'The Vicar of Wakefield' I suppose that his fame principally rests. But if we are to measure the public's appreciation by the tendency of writers and speakers to quote passages and bring them into familiar use, then the witty piece called "Retaliation" is his most successful effort. Its lines are handed about with great freedom—often used in Parliament and in the lecture-room—much resorted to by critics and essayists, and passed as currency by many a talker who knows not at what mint they were coined. The characters sketched in the poem were those of individuals; the application of the sketches is of unlimited extent.

My earliest acquaintance with Goldsmith (and it came very early in my career) was through his ballad "The Hermit," which I, with some difficulty, got by heart. I was so young and so unpractised in poetical methods as not to be able to comprehend the situation in the opening without assistance; but I remember well how powerfully affected I was by the romance when once I received it. The verses took firm hold, have withstood "the whips and scorns of time,"—

"In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share,"—

have presented themselves, and still do present themselves, though I have been face to face with time long enough to have forgotten many a thing which seemed more important than my childish task. Thus I am hardly an impartial judge; but it seems to me that, besides the sweet and kindly thoughts, and the affecting subject, the art shown in construction has much to do with the merit of the idyl. Simple as it reads, I should say there is very superior workmanship in it.

Now that peasant-proprietorships are so much in favour, Goldsmith's line—

"When every rood of ground maintained its man"—

suggests itself as if it were just written for the occasion. The poet, singularly happy in expression, has supplied a text on the sentiment of which men of a complexion far different from his may wrangle, after he has been asleep for an age. But we must look to him for nothing more than the text; he was not the man to take hard questions in his teeth and shake the truth out of them. No, happily he was not; for had he been given to demonstration, we should have wanted the inimitable pictures of the preacher, the pedagogue, the ale-house, the village-green, and the emigrants. I doubt if there be much wisdom in this delightful poem, and whether it may not have instilled into many minds grave mischievous error hidden in its surpassing sweets. But into its tendencies I will not now inquire; it is genuine poetry, brought pure from Helicon.

When one reflects on the many departments of the *belles lettres* in which Goldsmith's success has stood the test of a century—certainly tale, drama, satire, eulogy,

and most tender and melodious pastoral—the thought will rise that to him, much more aptly than to Sheridan, might Moore have applied his eulogy, that he ran

“Through each mode of the lyre, and
was master of all.”

Yet, with his various talents, he appeared to many simply as a medium through whose lips a familiar spirit poured stirring utterances which were hardly filtered through his brain; for, tried in society on a sudden, or when the weird influence was absent, he gave no indication of a superior mind, while he offered but too many proofs that he was neither wise nor prudent.

“What was good was spontaneous, his faults were his own,” are remarks that may be reflected upon the writer of them. Neither Johnson nor Goldsmith saw, probably, how he would appear to posterity, yet each seemed to have some insight into the other's genius. Goldsmith told Johnson that if he wrote of fishes, he would make them all whales; while Johnston said of his friend, that he would make a history of the earth and animated nature as entertaining as a fairy tale.

There was a common friend of them both in whose honour a centenary commemoration might have been very fitting, because, from the nature of his art, his productions could not remain to speak for themselves. I mean, of course, Garrick, whom we can know only by the descriptions and panegyrics which his contemporaries have handed down to us. Some ceremonies, addresses, and well-chosen dramatic exhibitions might have kept dear to memory one whom his own generation thought to be the foremost actor of all this world.

In writing thus, I do not, of course, overlook the fact that Garrick's fame has been preserved by the works of his friends.

Apropos of his fame, the assertion that he or any other, was the greatest actor that ever lived, sounds very arbitrary. That an actor was the first of his own time is a thing susceptible of proof by evidence: but how it can be proved that he excelled performers of another time beside whom he never appeared, and who were never seen by audiences who had enjoyed his presentations of characters, passes comprehension. It is a received axiom with some writers, and accepted by a vast number of believers, that Garrick was the greatest of the actors who have walked the English boards. But how compare Garrick with Macready or with Irving? It is hardly possible that a critic who has seen Irving can have seen Garrick. How, then, is a comparison to be made? This we know—viz., that Garrick's generation be-*Roscised* him, extolled him, and enjoyed his talents in a degree to which we find no parallel in foregoing or succeeding generations. This, however, simply proves that Garrick's contemporaries were more devoted to the drama than men of older time or than men of this day. Say that Garrick's career was run at a period when the minds of instructed men and capable critics were directed to the achievements of actors more intently than at any other time, and you will find few to differ from you; but this is very different from demonstrating that he was never equalled on the English stage. He improved, no doubt, the style of acting—was, as Goldsmith said, “natural, simple, affecting”—and so he won the hearts and admiration of all who witnessed his playing: yet others

may have done the same who had not the good fortune to be so worthily judged, or to possess so many friends able to sound so effectively the speaking-trump of fame. I think it is rather characteristic of us English, that in extolling our favourites we are prone to draw

upon the credit of other times as well as of our own. It is not very long ago since some fanatical sycophant of a minister who is not at the present moment very triumphant far or near, hailed him as "the greatest statesman of this or of any age."

AMERICA AND DYNAMITE.

As to the administration of the "statesman" whom I mentioned just now, while so many are deploring the miseries and dangers which in so many quarters he has brought upon us, I will point to one little streak of light in international affairs, which perhaps, amid our innumerable anxieties, has created less satisfaction than it should. The United States of America have at last become alive to the truth that it is not just, or creditable, or wise to allow their cities and territories to be used as rendezvous for bands of assassins who contrive the wickedest and most destructive crimes against the inhabitants of Great Britain and their property, or as workshops for the construction of diabolical engines for effecting those crimes. Impunity for these assassins lasted so long in America that we regarded the suppression of the contrivances at their source as hopeless; and even now, when America feels scandalised, we do not think ourselves much nearer relief from these practices. But it is a great deal, in such cases, to have public recognition of the criminality of these nefarious plotters. Even to rouse opinion against them will impede and discourage them greatly; and opinion once aroused, the discouragement will probably be followed up to the extent of legislation and legal action.

When we blame the Americans

for the indifference with which they have so long regarded the infamous doings, we must remember that many of them saw in the explosions and murders only a wild sort of justice. They were altogether disposed to think us unjust and oppressive, and the complaints which the Irish raised against us seemed to them well founded. Add to this that we have been, some of us, unwise enough to admit that there is justice in these complaints, and we can scarcely wonder that, after this plea of *guilty*, partial though it might be, they should not be eaten up with zeal to balk the Irishmen of their vengeance. There are many signs at last that they are perceiving the truth as to these matters. They have examined a little into the meaning of Irish wrongs, and not found them so grievous as they were supposed to be; they have also apprehended the morbid condition which led to self-accusation, and been rather amused at our penitential humour. Coincidentally almost with their waking up to a perception of the true state of the case, they have been startled by a cracker or two going off at their own doors, as may naturally be the case where lawless men and explosive agents are allowed to be collected. When one considers how difficult, if not impossible, it is to keep a cork firm over Irish energy after it has been raised to

a murderous temperature, the wonder grows that the cities and towns of America were not oftener scenes of murders and demolitions, which, intended for the Old World, boiled over, or went off at half-cock, before they left the New. The little murderous incidents at and near Mr O'Donovan Rossa's office have, however, supplied proofs that the volcanic action may prove dangerous even in the cradle of vengeance ; and one may hope to hear shortly that the gangs and their arsenals have been hunted out and dispersed.

We think the Americans were very inconsiderate and very callous, not to say very spiteful, in allowing Rossa and his villanous gang to go on so long unchecked and even unreprieved. We can see plainly enough what ought to be done when we are in danger ourselves. But how did we act when the French made against us exactly the same kind of complaint that we have since been making against the Americans ? Gangs of miscreants were endeavouring to assassinate the French Emperor and to create anarchy in France. They dared not hatch their plots and devise their murders on the other side of the Channel, so they came to England to plot and prepare. Louis Napoleon knew this, and remonstrated with our Government. Lord Palmerston, then Prime Minister, saw that our hospitality was being abused, and that we were lending ourselves as a convenience to the agents of crime and confusion. He accordingly introduced into the House of Commons a bill making the practices

of these desperadoes penal—a very moderate, reasonable bill, such as we should much like the Americans to enact on our behalf now. But our Commons had no patience at all with the proposal—they being in this instance not the objects but the shelter of the criminals. They grandly threw out the bill, and along with it they turned out Lord Palmerston. That way of dealing with such a proposal seemed to them at that time the right, honourable, and truly English one. We see things differently when our own withers are wrung. It was not, however, against the Americans that we sinned ; and they, fortunately, are now liable to act toward us in a spirit more liberal than formerly. There is also a little improvement in our mode of dealing with these wholesale destroyers at home. There seems to be a growing conviction that the “cat” may be justly and beneficially applied to the backs of these dynamitard villains ; and our lawyers have discovered that we may, without fresh legislation, make many of the explosions capital offences. One or two hangings and one or two floggings may be expected to produce very deterrent effects on our conspirators. I only trust that when any of them come to be hanged, the finishers of the law will be able to turn them off, and will really make a finish. It is too scandalous that, in this mechanical age, an abandoned scoundrel should escape from “edge of penny cord” because the drop on which he was perched would not answer to the hangman's efforts.

PENALTIES AND ASSIZE GOSSIP ; WITH A LOOK AT THE CLOCK.

Though, as I have said, the wisdom seems to be perceived among

us of sentencing workers in dynamite to the lash and to the cord,

yet it is certain that we are a long way from adopting death or flogging as a punishment for ordinary offences. Indeed we have well-nigh restricted legal punishment to imprisonment of some kind. Now it seems likely that before very long serious difficulties may be interposed between the law's victims and their imprisonment. A case has recently occurred wherein a first-class misdemeanor has had a considerable portion of his confinement remitted on the plea that the punishment was injuring his health. Probably it was. Confinement, in most cases, does not improve condition; the popular belief is, that it was never intended to do so. And up to this time most of us have been under the impression that a prisoner must take his chance of the effect on his health of expiating his offence, for expiated it must be. Without passing any reflection on what has occurred (for I am not acquainted with the representations which moved the Secretary of State to pity), I feel certain that

"'Twill be recorded for a precedent,"

and that prisoners will naturally be very quick to put forward certificates that their health is being destroyed, in order to escape part of their sentences. It is to be presumed that favor will not in this matter be shown to any individual or to any class of culprits—therefore that tickets of debility or disease will be just as much sought after as tickets-of-leave.

When I first began to think of this matter, it appeared to me to be purely and entirely an innovation; but upon consideration, I find that remission on the ground of low physical condition has in past times been allowed, though not in reference to the punishment of

imprisonment. When in the military services of older days, a man was sentenced to corporal punishment, the doctor always watched the infliction of the "cat," and could stop the chastisement if he found that it was exceeding the sufferer's physical power of endurance. The same rule which held in these cases—viz., that a sentence which was not intended to result in death or permanent injury should not be carried out to the extent of producing either of those results—may be applied not unreasonably to cases of imprisonment. But then arises the question, How are transgressors who cannot endure imprisonment without a serious breakdown of constitution to be punished at all? We shall either have to let them escape their penalties on the ground of delicacy, or to invent a new punishment, the infliction of which will not be confined to able-bodied, vigorous prisoners. A great number of our criminals are, it is to be suspected, not physically strong. Of course we must not for a moment think of letting them all loose on society, and allowing them to commit crime with impunity. Yet, on the other hand, what is to be done with them? Shall we have sanatory retreats with pleasureaunces attached, sheets of water for boating, and horses and carriages for enjoying the air? Three months in such seclusion would make an agreeable and salutary change from the treadmill; and if this relaxation were resorted to once a year, or perhaps oftener, offenders of any degree of delicacy might with such aid contrive to serve out their time. Or shall we look for some grief that shall be sharper for the moment, but of shorter duration? A rogue who should be pronounced incapable of enduring twelve months' imprisonment with hard

labour, might be strong enough to stand a few hours in the pillory or to be branded. One hardly likes to pursue this train of thought farther, until opinion shall have ripened somewhat; but it really looks as if, modern penal inventions proving inapplicable, we were to be driven back upon some of the tender mercies of the middle ages. Levity apart, we shall have to devise speedily punishments which can *with certainty* be inflicted. Those which there is a fair chance of evading on the plea of failing health, genuine or pretended, will altogether lose their deterrent effect; for every knave will think himself clever enough to get the length of the doctor's foot, and so run the chance of anything which does not promise to be more severe than "quod."

The law's inflictions have altered very much within the period that I can recollect. I remember to have seen a man whipped in the market-place. I have seen a man in the stocks. I have seen and heard a man condemned to death for sheep-stealing, and remember one to have been hanged for robbery on the highway, and another for stealing a horse and committing sundry other thefts. Scarlett and Wilde in court are two figures whom I can recall with tolerable distinctness. The generation before mine remembered Erskine, and some of my friends of that generation had a good deal to say about him. I will repeat one anecdote. Erskine (I presume, after he had held, or while he was holding, office) was brought down to a country assize town to plead in some important case. Either there had been some uncertainty until the last about his being able to attend, or there had been some mismanagement, so that accommodation was not early

secured for him. The place had but a limited quantity of disposable rooms; the early comers got possession of all these; and when the eminent counsel arrived, not a chamber could be procured at all—a chamber for hire, that is; but he did find where to lay his head, and more than that too. For a clergyman, who was head-master of the grammar-school, was quite shocked to hear of Erskine being so hardly put to it. So he invited him into his own house, and placed two or three of the best rooms at his disposal. The business lasted only a very few days, when Erskine, on departing, told his host that he hardly knew how adequately to thank him for his attention, and that he should be very happy if he ever found he had an opportunity of returning the favour. "You will have that, sir, before long, without doubt," answered the schoolmaster. "You are quite sure to become Lord Chancellor, and, by the time you are so I shall be very glad to give up teaching and to settle down in a living." Erskine was afraid there was no such glory in store for him as his entertainer anticipated, but he repeated his offer of service whatever station he might occupy. When he became Chancellor the clergyman got his living. Whether Erskine gave it without reminder, or whether the parson had to ask for it, I cannot remember, but certainly the Chancellor paid honestly and well for having been taken in and done for in his need.

Up to a little before my day there was always an assize ball; and the ceremonies observed in bringing the judges into town were, within my recollection, exceedingly quaint. I have an account of them somewhere, and may possibly give it to *Maga's* readers on another occasion. I

have not left myself space for it in the present paper ; but I will mention, before I forget it again, the resistance to serving the office of high-sheriff which was persistently and successfully offered for many years by an eccentric old squire. He cared little for the honour and glory of the shrievalty, and objected most earnestly to the trouble and expense, for he would have had to buy a state carriage, set up a troop of retainers, and I know not what besides. On the other hand, there was a fine of, as I think, £500 for not serving the office, if once nominated to it. The problem therefore, for the old character, was to avoid serving the office, and avoid paying the fine. This he solved very effectually by giving notice to the officers who named the magnates from whom the sheriff would be selected, that if made sheriff he would serve. "But as sure as you live," he added, "I'll go with a wain and oxen to meet the judges, and my people shall come in smock-frocks, with forks in their hands." Everybody was convinced that he would do as he threatened ; they did not dare to commit the honour of the county to such hands ; and he went down to the grave a very old man, without having been ever troubled to execute the office of chief magistrate.

And now, by a glance at the clock, I learn that I must give over my musings, and betake myself elsewhere. By the way, is it now a decreed method that we are to change the small hours of our afternoons into teens and twenties ? If so, who is to bring

about the alteration, and for whose benefit is it to be done ? I quite fail to perceive what gain there can be in marking the dial with XVI.'s and XXIV's., or in talking of twenty-one o'clock, to compensate for the wrench which our habits will suffer in remaining the afternoon and evening hours. We shall be spared the trouble of writing A. M. and P. M. when we specify the time of day, and we shall avoid the confusion which might possibly arise from omission to insert these abbreviations ; in return, we shall have a cumbersome method of notation. Surely the old style has not been found so inconvenient that a new one is imperatively called for ! For my part, I have run through a large number of years without ever coming to thirteen o'clock, and I could be well content to live out my span without being ever taught by proud science to stray to that numerator of time. We can see how the world wags quite as well with small numbers as with mouth-filling ones, and the tale which hangs thereby will be as impressive in units as in dozens. When it was necessary to alter the reckoning of years, those who understood the matter submitted to inconvenience with a good grace, and kept Epiphany on what would have been Christmas-day, because there had been really an error in the old style. But there is no error in reckoning the twelve hours twice in the astronomical day ; and all I have to say is, that—well, I can't say all that is in my heart just now, for if I do I shall inevitably miss my train.

RUSSIA IN SEARCH OF A FRONTIER.

SINCE the year 1863, when Russia may be said to have definitely set out on her southern march through Central Asia, collision between her and Great Britain has simply been a matter of time. So obvious was this fact, that it was superfluous to assert it, and folly to deny it. Yet there is no question of our time that has been more rancorously discussed than this Central Asian question, which, put in its plainest and most definite form, is—Are British and Russian interests likely to meet in conflict in High Asia? Divested of party feeling and prejudice, the Central Asian question never could have had but one side that would bear exposure to the light of reason. Once committed to a southward movement, Russia must go on until she found herself confronted by some barrier, either natural or political, strong enough to stay her advance. “Imperious necessity,” Prince Gortschakoff pointed out in 1864, in his famous circular defending the new annexations, was urging Russia on against her will; and we, with our experience in India, were bound to acknowledge the force of the same motive power which had carried us from Calcutta to the Khyber, until we there met with a natural frontier.

Granted that Prince Gortschakoff’s “imperious necessity” afforded a valid excuse for Russia’s marching southward from the Jaxartes and absorbing the Central Asian khanates, it was clear that the same motive must continue to impel her on until she encountered a power strong enough to arrest her progress, and a frontier line sufficiently settled to allow of no causes of quarrel or contention

with those on the other side. But where was this to be found? Certainly not before she had reached the British Indian border. Thus, accepting “imperious necessity” as the sole motive that was forcing her southward, we had only to wait, with a full assurance that time would speedily bring her face to face with us at the western end of the Khyber Pass. But there were soon evidences that there were other and more powerful motives at work in addition to the avowed impulse. Each great step that Russia has taken in Central Asia has been taken by stealth, in direct violation of her assurances, and frequently in contravention of her solemn guarantees. She has confessed herself that she cannot control her advance: her progress has been uniformly marked by fraud and dissimulation. In either case, whether pushed forward by the irresistible force of events, or pressing onward to gratify a greedy lust of territory, only one conclusion could lie before a sensible onlooker—that a *rencontre* between Britain and Russia must ultimately ensue, and that it remained with the former to fix the place of meeting.

If any politicians of the “masterly inactivity” school have survived the shock which the events of the last few months must have caused them, with what feelings can they look back upon the long and bitter discussions which have taken place during the past twenty years! Every plea they had advanced in excuse of Russia—every assurance, when another khanate had been swallowed up, that now the bourne had been reached—every apology for Russian annexation,—

have been shown to be quite as worthless as Russia's own professions on the subject. And this is not all. They have consistently sought to mislead the British public as to the position and aims of Russia in Asia—have, successfully for the most part, endeavoured to frustrate all attempts to induce the Government to get Russia to specify a definite limit to her encroachments—and have misrepresented the warnings of those statesmen who distinctly foretold what must ensue, as the utterances of Chauvinists wishing to provoke a quarrel with a friendly Power whose mission it was to divide with ourselves the task of civilising Asia. Should a rupture ensue from the present collision on the Afghan frontier, the preachers of "masterly inactivity," and the Liberal Government, that has always been a servile promoter of their doctrines, will be, in reality, more to blame than Russian generals or Russian diplomatists.

Looking back from our present stand-point face to face with the Russian outposts in the Murghab and Heri-Rud valleys, we may well wonder how, in the face of patent facts, a policy of "masterly inactivity" ever for a moment obtained a hearing. From 1863 down to the present time, Russia's career has been one uninterrupted progress; and she has utilised the occasions when a halt has been called for an explanation of her intentions, to consolidate her conquests and to prepare for the next spring. In the course of eleven years she covered the vast country between the Jaxartes and the Oxus, either wholly reducing it to Russian territory, or leaving it under the nominal government of native rulers who are mere puppets in the hands of the Czar's military commanders. In 1863 her southern frontier was

the line of the lower Jaxartes and the Chu river to Issik Kul Lake. She seized on Tashkend in 1865, reduced Bokhara to vassalage in 1867, entered Samarcand in 1868, and annexed Khiva in 1873. The flagrant violation of her pledges in the case of Khiva, and the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war, forced her for a while to pause in her aggressions; but no sooner were her arms set free in Europe than she began a new advance, this time by the Attrek Valley, which was to lead her direct to the Afghan border, and thus bring to a direct issue the question how long the forbearance of Britain would last.

In reality her conquests in the khanates were of little consequence compared with this last encroachment, which was planned, and to some extent carried out, by the genius of Skobelev. Until the Turkomen tribes lying to the south of the Oxus were as completely broken to her yoke as the Khirgiz and Usbeks on the other side, her power must always be more or less subject to disturbance. When the Turkomans were reduced, there would lie no further obstruction to a junction between her armies of Turkistan and of the Caucasus. When the news of Skobelev's victory at Geok Tepe, and of the occupation of Askabad which speedily followed, showed that the way lay open to Merv and Sarakhs, it was surely high time for Britain to bethink herself of what the next step must be. When the Russians in 1863 commenced to move from Fort Kasala on the Jaxartes, the British Government began to entertain suspicions as to their ultimate destination—although then a distance of 1682 miles, much of it desert, and all of it difficult, separated them from our frontier; but now that at Sarakhs she is little more than 700 miles from Quetta,

the Government evidently thinks it can afford to treat her presence as a matter of indifference.

For this last and most important movement Russia has chosen her time happily. The well-known callousness of the Gladstone Government to all the foreign, and especially the Indian, interests of Britain, was a safe guarantee that no obstacles would be placed in the way of her advance from the Caspian; while the troubles in which the Premier had involved his country forbade the supposition that under his administration Britain would engage in a war with Russia save as a last resort. Accordingly, she waxed bold, and swept up Sarakhs, although our military authorities were well aware of the importance of that position. Indeed a little before the annexation of this post, Sir C. Macgregor had reported that Sarakhs could not fail to exercise a very serious influence on the momentous issue of the Indo-Russian frontier question.

"This," he says, "must happen, whether it fall into the hands of the friends of England or into those of her foes. Whether Russia use Sarakhs as a base for offensive measures against Herat, or England use it as a defensive outpost to defeat any such operations, that position will be heard of again. And if my feeble voice can effect a warning ere it is too late, let it here be raised in these words—*If England does not use Sarakhs for defence, Russia will use it for offence.*"

In spite of this significant caution Sarakhs was allowed to fall an easy prey to the advanced forces of Russia, and it was only when it was too late that the British Government began to feel alarmed, and to press for an amicable delimitation of the frontier.

Misfortune seems hitherto to

have unfailingly attended all our efforts to have a proper demarcation of the north-western boundary of Afghanistan effected. Lord Mayo, when Viceroy of India, was very anxious for a timely settlement of this difficult subject. When the "neutral zone" policy was arranged with Russia during Sir Douglas Forsyth's mission to St Petersburg in 1869, it was agreed that the territory then actually held by Shere Ali Kahn was to constitute the limits of Afghanistan, and it was intended that the boundary-line should be fixed on this principle. A rough agreement was arranged between Lord Loftus and Prince Gortschakoff in the winter of 1872-73; but as it was not followed up by a survey, and was accompanied by the "most decided and positive assurances that not only was it far from the intention of the Emperor to take possession of Khiva, but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it," and that "his Majesty the Emperor considers extension of territory to be an extension of weakness," it is not much wonder although it speedily passed out of account. Lord Mayo's lamented death prevented that action which would have undoubtedly been taken, to have the frontier line strictly marked off; and his successor, Lord Northbrook, so effectually succeeded in alienating the confidence of the Ameer, that no proposals from the Government of India for a formal delimitation would have been listened to. Lord Northbrook bequeathed to Lord Lytton all the elements of a rupture with Afghanistan, and the war which followed placed the frontier question in the background. Lord Ripon, the next Viceroy, was too much occupied in carrying out his orders to "scuttle out" of Afghanistan, and too little

concerned about the foreign politics of British India, to trouble himself regarding the matter, until the advance upon Sarakhs, and the preparations for carrying on a line of railway from Kizil Arvak to Askabad, warned the Government that the subject was no longer to be trifled with. At last, after much delay, Sir Peter Lumsden's expedition was despatched, to the manifest chagrin of Russia, who naturally thought that as the settlement of the frontier had been staved off so long, it would be to her advantage to be able to advance a *uti possidetis* claim to Herat. From the time Sir Peter Lumsden's mission became a certainty, she threw every obstacle in the way of its accomplishing its task that diplomatic ingenuity could devise. Difficulty after difficulty was started; she could not make up her mind as to a commissioner; and at last, when one was named, an officer was chosen whose inferior rank in itself implied a direct insult to the British Government, and whose instructions have apparently been to treat both the mission and its object with the loftiest contempt. Upon no previous occasion in our history would Russia have dared to play with the temper of England as she has done on this occasion. But she knew the Government with which she had to deal; she knew also the embarrassments amid which we are at present labouring; and she was quite prepared to take what capital she could out of our disabilities.

With regard to the points which at present are professedly at issue between the two Powers, we consider them of infinitely less importance than the dangers that arise out of the attitude in which they have been placed towards each other in the Murghab and Heri-Rud valleys. No doubt it is

our duty, as well as our ultimate interest, to endeavour to preserve for the Ameer all the territory that properly belongs to Afghanistan, as well as to place the frontier line as far as possible from Herat. But since we have allowed Sarakhs to fall into the hands of Russia without a murmur, we cannot very consistently make the possession of less important positions a serious ground of quarrel, except on the plea that we are bound to protect the integrity of the Ameer's dominions. The acquisition of Zulficar, or even Penjdel, would in reality add little to the menace which the Russian possession of Sarakhs already throws out against Herat. If that city is to continue Afghan territory, it is obvious that it will have to be fortified and garrisoned in a way that no other city in Afghanistan—we may almost say no other city in the East—is garrisoned and fortified. And to accomplish this, the unaided resources of Afghanistan are quite inadequate. She has not the money or the engineering skill requisite to convert Herat into a fortress that could withstand, if needed, months of a regular siege and the assaults of Russian artillery. Moreover, she has no troops that could be sufficiently depended upon for the defence of so important a fortress. In other words, since by our carelessness we have allowed the Russians to creep up to its gates, the safety of Herat must entail a new charge on the British Government, unless it has made up its mind to tolerate the presence of the Russians, first at Cabul and Kandahar, and shortly after at the mouths of the Khyber and Bolan Passes. No "agreement" or "arrangement," or even the most solemn treaty that can be concocted, will now suffice to relieve us from this responsibility;

and after all, we can scarcely be said to be paying more than a fair price for the neglect with which, for twenty years, we have regarded the Russian encroachments, and for the consummate folly which induced the Gladstone Government, in a fit of pique with the policy of its predecessors, to abandon the position which we held at Kandahar at the close of the last Afghan war. It is to the abandonment of Kandahar that the whole of the present difficulty is directly due; for it was not until it was positively announced that we were to "scuttle" out of Afghanistan that the Russians began to press in the direction of Merv and Sarakhs. Had a British garrison been in Kandahar at the present moment, we would have had no more anxiety about Herat than we have about Peshawur.

It is evident that Mr Gladstone's Government has again entered upon a course of timorous diplomacy, from which it is most unlikely to extract an effective remedy for the present difficulty, and out of which it is absolutely certain to come second best. A diplomatic duel in which Lord Granville is pitted against M de Giers, must be a spectacle as ridiculous to the rest of Europe as it is painful to ourselves. Already, in what little of the negotiations have been allowed to transpire, we have not figured to advantage. While Lord Granville is fidgeting, and sending special messages to St Petersburg to make sure that Mr Gladstone was correct in his explanation of the "arrangement" which is to last "as long as there is occasion for it," and which, it is presumed, will keep the Russians from advancing farther while efforts to settle the dispute are pending, Russia is calling councils of her generals, M de Giers is bustling

between the Chancellery and Gatschina, troops are being hurried across the Caspian to the scene of dispute, all the Russian stations in Turkestan are in a bustle of preparation; and probably we shall speedily hear of strong forces massing at Charjui and Kilif, the two points on the Oxus from which, as bases, Russia can most effectively operate. Whatever may be the upshot of the discussions between the British and Russian Governments, we can clearly see that Russia's position will be greatly improved by delay, by which she assuredly will not fail to profit. In fact, if we look frankly at the situation, both Herat and our expedition may, without exaggeration, be said to lie at her mercy. According to the most recent accounts, Russia has 4000 men in and about the Murghab Valley, and as many more on the Heri-Rud; while the British expedition numbers only 400, exclusive of the officers of the Commission. Of the Afghan strength we have no accurate information, but it must have been largely increased within a very recent date, if it is able to cope with the Russian force with which it is now confronted. And we must remember that every week of delay will add to the Russian strength. She could without difficulty spare 70,000 men from the army of the Caucasus; she could draw half as many more from Turkestan; and we have no means of estimating the hordes of Turkoman levies she could at once throw upon Afghanistan. It will be seen, then, that the position about Herat is a precarious one, especially since it depends upon nothing more stable than Mr Gladstone's "arrangement," which chance or intention may at any moment dissolve in open hostilities. Nor is Herat the only point from

which Russia is effectively able to menace the integrity of Afghanistan and disturb our position in India. Suppose, in case of a rupture, Russia lays siege to Herat, she can still draw sufficient forces from Tashkend, and other garrisons in the khanates, to overrun the Afghan territory of Balkh, which is probably not less an object of her ambition than the possession of Herat itself. Indeed it might not be a very extravagant speculation to suppose that Balkh, with the Paropamisus range for a frontier, is the "golden bridge" of which broad hints are now being dropped. But neither by the Ameer nor by the British could such a proposal for one minute be tolerated. Russia in Balkh would be even more dangerous to us than Russia at Herat. As it is, if we are involved in hostilities, the chances of a Russian invasion of Balkh must greatly increase our responsibility and danger. Because the tide of the invasion of India from Central Asia has always, with the exception of Baber's invasion, rolled past Herat, we have been too apt to assume that there is no other channel through which it can flow except the traditional one. Sir Henry Norman, one of the staunchest supporters of Lord Lawrence's "masterly inactivity" policy, admits that "if Russia really intends to injure us in India, which of course would involve war in Europe, my impression is, that she is at least as likely to make an advance from the direction of Tashkend towards Afghan-Turkistan and Cabul, as to move forward by Herat." The whole distance from Tashkend to Cabul is only 841 miles. The road is good, with the exception of 150 miles of sandy desert between Karshi and the Oxus, and the passes of the Hindoo Kush, which

are difficult, and which would supply the Afghans with means of offering serious resistance to an invading force. At all events, by throwing troops from Tashkend into Balkh—and it is agreed that for this object from 25,000 to 30,000 men and 30 guns are available, to say nothing of levies of irregulars—Russia could divide the attention of the British and the Afghans and compel them to assume a defensive attitude at Cabul as well as at Herat. Nor is this all. From Balkh, Russia can command the passes leading to India by Chitral, Kashmir, and Ladakh, and compel us to concentrate a considerable part of our attention upon the direct defence of our own frontier. These routes, no doubt, are difficult, are even probably impracticable for a siege-train; but nevertheless, it is not beyond the vigour and audacity of Russia to attempt them. Nor can we afford to overlook even the remotest possibility of her gaining a footing on the flank of the Punjab. We shall therefore be compelled to guard the safety of the northern frontier of India, as well as do battle for the integrity of the Ameer's dominions, if unfortunately the negotiations now going on do not lead to a peaceful solution of the questions at issue.

The situation which now confronts us at present is all the more perplexing that it differs in many respects from the calculations which we have hitherto formed as to the way in which a collision between Britain and Russia would take place in the East. We have generally assumed that Afghanistan would fall under the influence of Russian intrigue, and that we would have the Ameer as well as the Czar for enemies. Our experience of Afghan politics has

hitherto strongly favoured this view, which indeed was on the point of being realised had not the Treaty of San Stefano put an end to the efforts which Russian agents were making to excite the Ameer against the Indian Government, as well as to Russia's intention to strike at British power in the East in the event of our taking part with Turkey. But it can scarcely be said that we have calculated much on the probability of fighting side by side with the Ameer for the security of his dominions. The present situation has its advantages, but also its drawbacks. We have too good reason to know that the alliance of the Afghan people is not to be despised in the field even against a European foe; and it is a decided gain that we can look upon Afghanistan as a buffer, and not as a battering-ram to be driven against us. We see no reason to doubt the honesty of the Ameer on this occasion; and Abdulrahman must have had enough of experience of Russian rule in Asia during his years of exile to know what he and his subjects have to expect if they were to fall directly or indirectly under the dominion of the Czar. It is also no small matter that we shall carry with us in our defence of the Ameer's territories the sympathies of the Indian Mussulmans, whose minds are only too easily unsettled when we come into collision with any race of their co-religionists. In a paper prepared for Government by a distinguished general officer in 1878, when war with Russia seemed imminent, the following passage very justly expresses the effect which would be produced upon them.—

“In such a war as is here supposed, the Mohammedans of India and Af-

ghanistan would believe only that we were fighting against the traditional enemy of their religion; and the measure promises such advantageous results for our dominion in India, that a patriotic Englishman might almost be pardoned for *hoping* that his country should be driven by inadmissible demands on the part of Russia to declare war.”

But the interest that our Mohammedan subjects naturally take in the question at issue is a fact that the Government ought by no means to leave out of account in its endeavours to affect a peaceful accomodation. However much we may desire by concession to obviate the danger of kindling war both in Asia and in Europe, we must beware of sacrificing the interests of our ally to our desire for maintaining a good understanding with Russia. Such an error would not only, in all probability, alienate the Ameer, and ultimately throw him into the arms of Russia, but it would have the worse possible effect upon the feelings of the Indian Mussulmans, who are always jealously watching for any breach of faith towards Islam, as an excuse for giving expression to their natural antipathy for an infidel Government. Even peace might be purchased at too high a price if we shook the faith of the Afghans, and of their co-religionists in India, in our respect for our treaty obligations. It must be remembered, too, that in the course of these negotiations our Indian prestige will have to go through a very trying ordeal. Every concession, the slightest appearance of a surrender, will be regarded as wrung from us through a fear of encountering Russia in the field; and there probably never was a time when we stood more in need of all the advantages which our

prestige secures for us in the eyes of our Indian subjects. In somewhat less than five years, the Marquis of Ripon succeeded in breaking down that good feeling between native and European which his predecessors—especially Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo, and Lord Lytton—had been carefully building up ever since the conclusion of the Mutiny. The minds of the natives have been more unsettled during the last four years than during the whole previous period from the Queen's assumption of the government. Rejoicing in the licence so inconsiderately granted to it, the native press has assumed a tone towards Europeans which, however little likely to influence the educated classes, can scarcely fail to poison the minds of the masses. One of the worst features of the native press is the importance which it gives to the rivalry of Russia and Britain in the East, and the broad hints which it throws out that we who have subjugated ourselves, are cowed in our turn in the presence of Russia. We could afford to overlook such language so long as Russia was as far off as Samarcand or Khiva; but with her troops almost at the gates of Herat, the case is different. The Czar is no longer the White Spectre; to the people of India he has now become a living visible reality. The result of the present negotiations regarding the Afghan frontier will afford a ready test to the natives of India for estimating in their own minds the relative strength of Russia and Britain; and we regret to say that any accommodation that the latter may feel justified in affording, will be hailed by the greater part of the vernacular press as a sign of weakness on the part of the rulers of India, and be paraded before the people as the submission of

England to a Power which she is not able to withstand. Even a greater danger than the menace which the armed strength of Russia would throw out were she to reach the neighbourhood of our Indian frontier, would be the effect which her presence would have in unsettling the minds of our native subjects, and in presenting to them an outlet towards which disaffection and discontent would naturally flow.

At the present moment, while the scales, it might be said, are still swaying between peace and war, it is almost impossible to venture on a prediction as to which side the beam may lean. One fact is plain, that thanks to our own negligence Russia has this time caught us on the hip, and that we shall have to pay the penalty in one way or another. We may build the "golden bridge" for her, but it will be at the expense of our ally, whose interests we are bound to protect, and consequently of our own honour and of our credit in the East. But we may well doubt whether at the present moment Russia will be easily satisfied by concessions. She knows how greatly our military power is crippled by our position in Egypt, and she knows also that another such favourable opportunity for asserting her right to hold on her way may be long before it again presents itself. Probably the consideration that the war would not be confined to Asia, has greater weight with her in professing a desire for peace than any misgivings that she would be likely to entertain about holding her own with us at present on the Afghan frontier. We have every reason also to believe that whatever influence the European Powers may exercise in the dispute, will be in favour of an amicable settlement. Prince Bismarck, probably,

will not be loath to re-enact his part of honest broker, and to pocket his commission in the shape of whatever facilities we may think fit to afford to his colonial policy. France, in spite of all that we have recently conceded to her, is a more doubtful factor; for there has been of recent years a very close understanding between Paris and St Petersburg, and any war in which we might be engaged that would make Egypt a matter of secondary consequence, would afford a temptation which the Republic might find it hard to resist. Perilous as the situation is, there is still ground for hoping that the counsels of the Powers may persuade Russia to moderation, and that a war may be obviated, the limits and results of which no diplomatic foresight is capable of determining.

The spirited conduct of the Indian Government will also not be without effect. Lord Dufferin is already bustling to get 50,000 men at once ready for the field, and the native princes are equally enthusiastic; for Sindiah has, it is said, placed his troops at the disposal of Government. If Herat should fall into the hands of the Russians, it will be no fault of the Indian Government, but due rather to the incapacity of a Cabinet which never yet could perceive danger except to suit its own views, or meet an emergency when brought face to face with it.

Should war be providentially

averted, the present scare will not be without profit. It will have rung the knell of "masterly inactivity," which has indeed been dying a natural death for several years past. It will force us to realise, what we ought all along to have been aware of, that Afghanistan can only stand by British protection and assistance. We shall have to re-do all that the present Government foolishly—we may say wickedly—undid. We shall not merely have to again garrison Kandahar, but we shall have to place the security of Herat, and the due observance of whatever frontier may be adopted, under the charge of British officers, if not British-Indian troops. In no other way can we guarantee that a pretext for further aggression will not be afforded to Russia; and experience has taught us that a so-called "imperious necessity" may at any time cause her to override all her pledges. As we have said above, the protection of Herat must necessarily henceforth devolve upon ourselves, for the Afghans are not able for such a task, neither are they to be implicitly trusted. If we look at the immediate crisis in the light of a lesson, and read it rightly, we shall not have much cause to regret our present alarm. If we trifle with it, as we have hitherto done with all similar warnings, the day cannot be far distant when the question of Britain's existence as an Eastern Power must be put upon its trial.

THE FALL OF KHARTOUM, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE betrayal of Khartoum was one of those stunning blows which occasionally fall on a nation for their sins or for the folly and incapacity of their rulers. It would be difficult to exaggerate the gravity of the crisis with which England is now confronted. The local and immediate consequences of the calamity are serious enough; what its far-reaching effects on the Mohammedan world may be, it is impossible to forecast. At a time, too, when England has not one ally and only one friend—if one—in Europe, she is obliged, in order to remedy the imbecility of her rulers, to lock up for nearly a year, in a miserable war against African savages, the flower of her army, which it is quite possible may, before long, be urgently wanted elsewhere; her home garrisons meanwhile consisting of line battalions, for the most part of weak strength, four-fifths being recruits of under a year's service, and of embodied militia. But for all the consequences that may result from the fall of Khartoum, whatever they may be, one man is primarily responsible; for the members of Mr Gladstone's Cabinet have never had a will or a mind of their own. Our disasters are mainly due to the man of whom Carlyle said, he "believed Mr Gladstone to be one of those fatal figures created by England's evil genius to work irreparable mischief which he alone could have executed;" of whom we believe history will say that, with the best intentions, he worked more mischief to England than the very worst Minister that ever ruled the country; that he sacrificed the noblest and purest character, the Sir Galahad of his age, besides a hecatomb of other victims, to his

insatiable egotism and arrogance; and that he crowned a long series of administrative failures with the most disgraceful catastrophe that ever overwhelmed an English Minister.

The day of retribution will come, but it is not yet. What we have to do now, is to endeavour to repair the breaches he has made in our walls. The one thing that stands out clearly is, that Khartoum must be taken, and by English soldiers. The monstrous proposition has been put forward in certain quarters, that Turkish troops should be employed for that purpose. What! are we to give the finishing stroke to that prestige on which our imperial power so largely depends, and which has recently sustained so many damaging blows, by proclaiming that England is not strong enough, or spirited enough, or—what it would really amount to—that she is unwilling to spend money enough, to retrieve the situation in Egypt without foreign assistance? Especially would it be a fatal mistake if it should go forth to the Mussulman world, that England, herself a great Mohammedan Power, had been obliged to crave aid from Turkey in suppressing a Mohammedan insurrection.

The triumph of the Crescent over the Cross, of which Khartoum, for the Soudanese tribes, is now the visible symbol, must be reversed—can only be reversed—at Khartoum itself, the city which will always remain sanctified to English hearts by the sacrifice of the Christian champion. The power of the Mahdi was certainly overrated in the beginning; but, like a rolling snowball, it has gathered volume from the supine

ness of our Ministers. The destruction of General Hicks's army first brought the Mahdi into prominent notice; yet all the prestige he acquired by that victory did not enable him to concentrate against Khartoum, during the whole time that has since elapsed, more than 20,000 men, of whom, as General Gordon informed Lord Wolseley, not more than 3000 or 4000 were fighting men. Some of the most powerful of the Soudanese tribes—notably the Kabbabish, the Hawaweir, the Sowarab, and the Hassaniyeh—not only are no believers in the Mahdi's divine mission, but have a blood-feud with him, and are now actively helping us in providing camels and transporting stores. We cannot, however, hope to retain their assistance if we announce the intention of "scuttling" as soon as possible after the capture of Khartoum, and of leaving our allies to "stew in their own juice." Some people seem to imagine that "smashing the Mahdi" means that, after taking Khartoum, we should follow him to the burning wastes of Central Africa; but by the capture of that city the Mahdi will be smashed quite sufficiently for our purpose, for his power, like that of other impostors before him, claiming to be "some great one," would melt away like a snow-wreath under the influence of a reverse to his arms that would entirely discredit his divine claims; provided always, however, the tribes should not believe that we were about to abandon the country.

Even now in many quarters the power of the Mahdi is much exaggerated. We have witnessed an easy belief in the rumours that he was marching to annihilate our troops, at the head of 60,000 men, &c., &c. Now we do not believe that the Mahdi could collect in

any one spot 30,000 armed men, or that he could feed that number if collected; and the idea of his being able to move such a force to any distance is simply preposterous. An impression, too, seems to prevail that all the Mahdi's troops consist of fanatic Ghazis—men who eagerly court death to win the Mohammedan Paradise; whereas the fanatics are really only the steel-tip to the lance, and constitute a very small proportion of the whole, of whom the remainder have about as tender a regard for their skin as people in general. Unhappily, besides the moral effect of the capture of Khartoum, the Mahdi's military power has gained a great material accession by the large supply of guns, rifles, and ammunition captured with the city. Our massive squares, though in our opinion an unintelligent and dangerous formation, could, barring such mistakes as happened at Tamai and Abu Klea, laugh at the rush of the Arab spearmen; but it will be a very different matter when the enemy can bring into the field, in addition to the fanatic spearmen, thousands of men armed with rifles as good as our own, who would make the massive squares pay dearly for that faulty formation, as indeed they did at the battle of Gubat.

We have not insulted the intelligence of our readers by formulating any argument to prove that Gordon's death was due to his desertion by our rulers; the fact is patent to all, even to the docile majority whose votes on the latest motion of censure have enabled the Government to drag on a little longer their dishonoured existence. But besides that great calamity, our rulers will be directly responsible for the increased losses our troops must sustain in action from the improved

weapons of which a present has been made to the enemy by the supineness and folly of the Government.

Referring to the conflicting utterances of our Ministers respecting Khartoum, the 'Observer' says:—

"Under ordinary circumstances it would be unjust to assume the possibility that our Government were about to embark on so insane an enterprise as that of undertaking the recapture of Khartoum after Gordon's death, with the intention of evacuating the city as soon as its capture had been effected. In the light, however, of what has come and gone, such an assumption is not only natural, but justifiable."

Notwithstanding the childish declaration, "Our policy has absolutely undergone no change," the country may take comfort from the fact that hitherto the thing which the Government have declared the most strenuously they would not do, that thing they have always done; and that if they now say they will abandon Khartoum, the chances are a hundred to one in favour of their retaining it. But although their declaration of the "abandonment" policy is in some respects only laughable, it is in others most dangerous and criminal, as being certain to increase Lord Wolseley's difficulties, by alienating tribes whose assistance is now of supreme importance, and who would gladly remain friendly, though at some cost short of their ultimate ruin.' Mr Gladstone's personal pledges have always been a millstone round the neck of his

Cabinet; there is only one way in which the millstone can be got rid of.

The Mahdi's power of mischief consists now, not in his being able to personally lead a large force against Lord Wolseley, but in the probability of the scattered tribes along our line of communications being emboldened by the fall of Khartoum to develop active hostility; but it must add not a little to the bitterness of our present feelings to know that whatever power and influence the Mahdi has now acquired have been the deliberate work of our own Ministers; although that thick-and-thin partisan, the 'Daily News,' was bold enough to argue that the fall of Khartoum, having been due to treachery, could not be attributed to the delays of the Government, because it would equally have happened however early the relief expedition had been despatched;—that is to say, where treachery was at work the result must have been the same, whether a week, a month, or a year had been allowed for its operation! Yet with strange inconsistency the same journal sought to fix on Sir Charles Wilson, if not the blame, at least the cause of the calamity, in the following words:—

"The accusations of those who raise against the Government the cry of 'Too late' are unjustified. . . . Sir Charles Wilson did not leave for Khartoum till the 24th, losing three days. . . . Wilson, who might, so far as we can perceive, have been at Khartoum at least forty-eight hours before it actually fell, did not reach it till forty-eight hours after!"

The 'Times' correspondent, writing from Cairo on the 6th March, says: "It is rumoured, from a trustworthy source, that two tribes in the neighbourhood of Korti, recently friendly, have declared for the Mahdi. This change, necessitating our retirement to Dongola, is the first direct result of Mr Gladstone's fatal declaration, which has increased 50 per cent the difficulties of our task and the dangers of our troops. Lord Wolseley's sensible speech to General Gordon's men was an unavailing effort to counteract the effect of that declaration."

We quite agree with an "Old Liberal," writing in the 'St. James's Gazette,' that—

"Contemptible beyond expression it is that any public writer should endeavour to justify months and months of delay on the part of our Government, and to throw blame on Sir Charles Wilson and his brave men for a delay of three days, after a long and weary march through the desert, where he and his heroes had fought more than one desperate battle."

We have long since ceased to wonder at the intricate subtleties of the Prime Minister's mind, and at his marvellous powers of self-persuasion, or at the capacity to swallow of his docile majority in Parliament; but that Mr Gladstone, whose personal influence has survived his proved incapacity to govern only by virtue of his supposed earnestness and honesty of purpose, should have lowered himself by adopting the pitiful stock excuse provided for Ministers by the 'Daily News,' in the "treachery" arguments above given, must pass the comprehension of all candid minds.

Our Ministers do not seem to have taken into account the possibility of relief arriving too late to save Gordon, or to have been provided with any policy based on such a contingency. Sir E. Hamley says, in the 'Times' of the 28th Feb.: "Many campaigns have been ill planned, but this is probably the first that was ever based on the certainty of success. The plan, he says, "consisted in hurling a force into the enemy's country as a live shell is hurled from a gun, with no more power of retreat than a shell has." When the news of the fall of Khartoum reached the Government, they were like mariners, whose ship had sunk under them, in an open boat on a stormy sea, without compass or

steersman. What they did was to beseech their general to provide them with a policy, and some days were thus wasted in irresolution. What they ought to have done was to telegraph to Lord Wolseley, without the loss of a moment, that Khartoum was to be captured, promising him all the means he might demand for that purpose, but leaving the how and when to his discretion. It is understood that this was the course finally adopted by the Government, and we are glad to recognise that the measures they are taking are fully adequate to the occasion; but it is surely the very irony of fate that the Minister who capitulated to the Boers, in order to escape "blood-guiltiness" in South Africa, is now obliged to incur what must appear to him the awful guilt of shooting down, in North Africa, thousands of poor blacks, who, he has himself said, are only struggling for their freedom. We are bound to suppose that it is the latitude makes all the difference.

The choice of Suakin as our sea base now is something more than a confession of failure. We can hardly believe that Lord Wolseley made himself responsible for advocating the Nile route *preferentially*. It would be a sufficient condemnation of the latter to say that Berber, the capture of which must now be our first object, is 1700 miles from our transports at Alexandria, while it is only 260 from our transports at Suakin. There is every reason for believing—supposing operations had been commenced from Suakin at the same date as that on which they were commenced from Alexandria—that the railroad leading from the former place could have been completed for military purposes to a point within eighty miles of Berber by the 1st of December at latest. In

that case our troops coming from Suakin could have reached Berber quite as soon as Lord Wolseley's force was actually concentrated at Korti. Great difficulties would have doubtless presented themselves, as was the case on the Nile route; but we hold that the balance was decidedly in favour of advancing from Suakin. And if the balance had been doubtful, a conclusive argument would have been supplied in favour of Suakin by the consideration that our retreat from Berber would have been secure and easy at any moment, which can hardly be said with respect to the position our forces now hold at and about Korti.

When the secret history of the matter comes to be known, we conceive it will be found that Lord Wolseley, when asked by Ministers in July last if the Nile route was practicable, replied that, judging from his Red River experiences, it was so, though at the cost of a large expenditure of time and money. We know that preparations for the expedition were delayed weeks after he gave this opinion, and we also know that he fixed the 21st of January as the earliest date on which, in his opinion, it would be possible to join hands with Gordon; and the Government then cheerfully accepted all the risks of the chapter of accidents, including treachery, at Khartoum, during that long interval of time. It would almost seem that the Nile route was chosen in the hope that the expedition might arrive too late. The reason why our Ministers were so enamoured of the river route is given, we believe truly, by the 'Observer' in the following words:—

"If our troops had crossed the desert to Berber, they could hardly have done so without constructing the

long-talked-of railway. But if this railway had once been constructed, and ready communication had thereby been created between Soudan and the Red Sea, it would have been impossible after the expedition was over to abandon to the insurgents the district traversed by the railway. To use the Berber-Suakin route was, therefore, inconsistent with the desire of the Government to scuttle out of the Soudan as fast as possible; and, in consequence, the circuitous, costly and perilous Nile route was adopted."

A ray of sunshine piercing the surrounding clouds has come to us from our children over sea, in the offers from the Colonies to furnish troops for the Soudan; and we are glad to find that, after considerable hesitation on the part of the Government, they have been accepted—that from New South Wales immediately, the remainder conditionally. Those offers afforded our Government a perfectly unique opportunity of showing that they are able for once to rise above the mere vestryman's view of an imperial question, and of perhaps recording, as a set-off against the condemnation history must pronounce, that they laid the first stone of the fabric of imperial federation which the nation has so much at heart, but which, up to this time, has obtained no more consistency than "the airy fabric of a dream." The quality of Canadian soldiers is known and appreciated already. In 1878, when war with Russia was imminent, our General commanding in Canada was commissioned to raise a strong Canadian division for service in the field. The Dominion Government was ready to promote that object, and 10,000 men could easily have been obtained, had the turn of events not rendered it unnecessary. As for the Australians, if their prowess in the cricket-field is any measure of their behaviour

in the field of battle, they will indeed prove stalwart heroes. The spectacle of our Colonies shoulderto-shoulder with England in the Soudan, will act as a powerful sedative on the nations now snarling at her heels, and will prove a far more effective step towards the federation of the empire than the somewhat cumbrous machinery advocated in some quarters of Colonial Boards of Advice. It is not impossible that it might even go farther,—that it might prove the first step towards realising the idea of “English-speaking peoples” against the world, the first indications of which were given by the American captain when he carried his ship into action at the Peiho, with the cheery words, “Blood is thicker than water”; and by the valuable aid afforded us by American sailors, and by those of no other nation, at Alexandria.

The advocates of an “insular policy,” those who would abandon empire “to save expense and avoid obligations,” do not perceive that even from their own low standpoint, such a course would prove a ruinous economy. Fortunately England has not yet sunk to that depth where “the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that honour feels,” but she likes money’s worth for her money; and under the management of the Liberal party, while her honour has been tarnished, the guineas do not jingle, at least not in her own pockets. The very essence of finance is policy; and our Ministers have perhaps learnt at last, from the condition to which they have reduced Ireland, Egypt, and South Africa, that common-sense and firmness in the management of affairs at home and abroad are of more importance to the finances of a nation than the details of the most ingeniously constructed budget. And as for the

Soudan, how many heaven-inspired budgets will be required to recoup the country for the enormous outlay occasioned by mistaken policy?

We remember Mr Bright saying—in the pleasant, conciliatory manner in which it is his custom to speak of political opponents—that Lord Beaconsfield’s Ministry was the very worst ever known in England. If that were true then, time has proved that there may be “in the lowest depth a lower still,” for Lord Beaconsfield’s successors have not only beat his record hollow, but have hopelessly distanced all competition in the same line of business for ever. Mr Gladstone has had two opportunities of governing England. What has he made of them? At the close of his first administration, we, in common with thousands of others, went to bed at night and got up in the morning feeling sore at the slighting and contemptuous manner in which England was generally spoken of on the Continent, and Lord Beaconsfield’s great popularity was due to the fact that he reversed this state of affairs, and replaced our country in the position from which his predecessor had degraded her.

Mr Gladstone and his apologists (all his supporters are apologists) are prone to excuse his many failures by the plea that all his difficulties were inherited from Lord Beaconsfield. Supposing its truth to be granted for argument’s sake, it was his business to make the best of those difficulties, instead of proceeding, as he has done, on a downwardly graduated scale from bad to worse. But let us examine a little into the justice of the plea, and ask what Mr Gladstone did really inherit from Lord Beaconsfield.

First, he inherited an England

honoured and respected at home and abroad. What do we find now? England a byword and a reproach among the nations! He inherited an Ireland, according to his own statement in Mid-Lothian, more prosperous and contented than at any previous period of her history. What is her condition now? and how will he leave her at the end of his misused and baleful power? He inherited "Peace with honour." The whole history of his rule has been one of wars, and one of them, at least, dishonourably terminated! He inherited Egypt quiet, if not prosperous, under a dual control; of which he himself spoke favourably until it suited his purpose to discredit it; and the story of his administration of that unhappy country will be a blot on the annals of England in history for ever. And so on *ad infinitum*! Any comparison between Lord Beaconsfield as a statesman and Mr Gladstone, recalls irresistibly the poet's lines, which would almost seem to have been prophetically written for the present crisis:—

"Oh for a man with head, heart, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones
gone

For ever and ever by!
One still strong man in a blatant land
Who can rule and dare not lie."

No event of recent times has so deeply stirred the national feelings and the national conscience as the tragedy recently enacted at Khartoum. The movement for providing a worthy national memorial of Gordon—though somewhat suggestive of those who, in the Holy City of old, garnished the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers had killed—is only a natural outcome of the feelings of shame and contrition that Englishmen must always experience at the

mention of his name. A marble statue would be but a commonplace memorial for the man whose life-work and character were both unique; and it is to be hoped that Gordon's effigy will not add one more to the many satires in bronze or stone which now disfigure our thoroughfares, and of which the most monstrous example has recently been removed from Hyde Park corner. Whatever may be done in addition, the one monument which the nation owes to the national hero is the establishment of a strong and beneficent Government over those "poor Soudanese" whom Gordon loved, and for whom he died; so that future travellers visiting Khartoum and asking for Gordon's monument might receive the reply,— "Behold it in the broken shackles of the slave, in these smiling fields, in this contented people. *Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice.*"

The military situation in the Soudan is somewhat as follows: The advanced columns of General Buller on the right, and of General Brackenbury on the left, have been respectively drawn back to Korti. Under the new conditions created by the fall of Khartoum, this course was inevitable. According to present intentions, Lord Wolseley's headquarters will be retired to Dongola, and his force will be echeloned along the river between Handak and Merawi, the latter place being held as an advanced post by the Mudir of Dongola's infantry, with probably the Black Watch, a troop of Hussars, and two guns. There is not the smallest ground for apprehension of any danger resulting to our troops from attacks by the Mahdi or others; indeed it would be un hoped-for luck if such attacks were made. But we confess great anxiety for the health of our soldiers throughout

the dreadful heats which are only now beginning. The present plan seems to be, that they shall remain where they now are, until the moderate temperature of September shall enable them to resume active operations.

We fail to see any sufficient reason for locking up during the whole of the approaching summer, at a distance of 1400 miles from Alexandria, 9000 of our best troops, who may shortly be urgently required elsewhere. Berber is the strategical point of the military situation, and the primary object of our operations must be its capture. For that purpose General Graham's force amply suffices, and Lord Wolseley's army is therefore superfluous. It is a military axiom that one line of operations, and that as strong as possible, should lead to the objective point of the campaign: according to present appearances, there are to be two lines leading from diametrically opposite points of the compass—Suakin and Korti, distant from each other 500 miles, without any possibility of communication between them, excepting through Berber, which is held by the enemy. If Graham's force were not sufficient, and if military considerations were alone to rule, Lord Wolseley and his troops ought clearly to be transferred to Suakin, and in this view should be withdrawn to spend the summer at Cyprus, where they would be within reach either of Suakin or India, according to need. Here we are assuming that a retreat down the Nile is possible; for if otherwise, it is a conclusive condemnation of the Nile route having been chosen. The objection against such withdrawal consists only in the appearance it would present of deserting the Mudir of Dongola, and the tribes who have shown

themselves friendly. But the tidings of a decisive success obtained by Graham over Osman Digma, which we hope will soon be received, would spread like wildfire through the intervening country, and would counteract any unfavourable results that might otherwise flow from Lord Wolseley's retreat.

By choosing Suakin as our sea base, and by the resolution to construct the railway to Berber, the Government are undertaking in March 1885 that operation—namely, the opening of the Suakin-Berber road—which in March 1884 they declared to be impossible; undertaking it, too, at a time when all the conditions are more adverse,—when, instead of Berber being in our hands, it is held by the enemy and will be defended by all the power of the Mahdi, and when Osman Digma has gathered confidence and strength from a whole year's inaction and apparent timidity on the part of our troops. The opening of the road to Berber was never a question of anything but money and resolve. The construction of the railway through an enemy's country is analogous to the pushing of a sap against a fortress: as each length of the line is constructed, its terminus for the time being must be defended by a strongly intrenched garrison; and it happens that the local conditions are favourable. The first stage out of Suakin is 29 miles long to Handoub, standing at an elevation of 1800 feet; the second stage is 20 miles to El Sybil, at an elevation of 2300 feet; the third stage is 22 miles to Haratri, 2850 feet high, the summit of the line; the fourth stage is 33 miles to Wady Kokreb, at an elevation of 2300 feet; the fifth is 27 miles to Ariab, at a height of 1800 feet, which last

will probably be the site of an important field fortress, the posts in rear being held by small garrisons. All of the places named must be healthy in comparison with Suakin ; and the difficulties with regard to water-supply, which we suspect were exaggerated in order to excuse the no-action of our Government, will disappear *pari passu* with the construction of the railway. Osman Digma's powers to interfere with the work must be crushed decisively ; and we trust that in undertaking this necessary task, we shall hear nothing more of the employment of those massive squares in battle, which have occasioned at least three-fourths of our losses in the past, and on three occasions came near producing serious disaster. It is to be hoped that the lamented General Earle's brilliant tactics at Kirbekan will mark a return to the old fighting traditions of our army, and that it will no longer be thought necessary to huddle up our troops, for the sake of safety, in a cramped formation in which they can neither move nor fight with effect, and in which only one rifle out of four can fire to the front ; or dangerous to trust them against savage warriors in the "unconquerable red line." At Kirbekan the same brave enemy, whose attack in the open it was not previously thought prudent to meet except in a massive square formation, occupied a strongly intrenched position, with numbers estimated at about 2000, armed mostly with Remingtons. General Earle, with 8 companies of the Royal Staffords and 6 companies of the Black Watch—1000 infantry in all—with 2 guns, after five hours' hard fighting, turned the enemy out of all his defences, one of them being a fort on the summit of a hill 400 feet high, only to be reached by climbing on hands and

knees ; the result being a larger comparative loss to the enemy than in any of the previous battles, with what must be considered numerically as a very slight loss to ourselves.

Recent experience has entirely justified the opinion we expressed in our number of last May, that the massive square is an unintelligent and dangerous formation, perfectly inexcusable except where it can await attack on its own ground as at Ulundi, and then only when the firearms in the hands of the enemy are small in number and inferior in quality, — a formation which neutralises all the advantages of superior training and weapons on the part of the soldier, and of superior science on the part of the general. The one lesson the British army, for its comfort, may derive from the recent battles, is, that a line of British infantry, two deep, defended by steady breech-loading fire, is unapproachable in front by any number of savages, however devoted. The sole condition of success for such a line is that its flanks are protected ; and all the tactical instruction imparted at our military schools and garrison classes must be pronounced worthless, if 4300 British troops, in their traditional two-deep line, provided with cavalry and artillery, as at Tamai, and whose fire in line would defend a front of more than a mile in extent, are not able to protect their flanks and rear by manœuvring against 10,000 savages. At Abu Klea the odds of 10,000 men against 1400 were perhaps too great to justify a line formation on open ground ; but we hold it as certain that a series of independent small squares, which can be formed in a moment from column of march, and which could afford each other flanking defence,

would have been preferable to one unwieldy square, able to move only at a snail's pace. The losses recently sustained by our troops supply a sufficient condemnation of the latest innovation on common-sense and military science. At Tamai, 107 were killed and 116 wounded out of 4300; at Abu Klea, 85 were killed, 92 wounded, out of 1400. These losses were due to fighting in square. At Tel-el-Kebir we lost only 76 killed; and at Kirbekan, where our troops attacked a strongly intrenched position, only 10 of all ranks out of 1000 were killed, after five hours' fighting. Although both at Tamai and Abu Klea we narrowly escaped a serious disaster, the battle of Gubat was the most risky of all, where our troops for five hours presented the helpless mark of a dense square to the enemy's riflemen, who were almost entirely secure from our return fire; and if they had been commanded by any one who knew his business, their spearmen, by only threatening to charge, instead of attempting to do so in reality, would have kept our men under a fire which they would not have been able to return, during the whole subsequent march to the Nile. Fortunately, however, they did charge in earnest. None of them reached within thirty yards of our muzzles, and the discouragement occasioned by their heavy loss caused their whole force to break up.

From many private letters written by officers who were present, it seems probable that a considerable part of our loss at Abu Klea was occasioned by our own fire. An officer of the mounted infantry writes:—

“Our skirmishers just got home in front of the enemy, and that was all. The latter had risen from a mass in the ditch under their flags, and came

on more like a torrent of water than anything else, quite silently. What told against us was our own men coming back, and so preventing our firing till they were among us: then came a scene, I pray God I may never see again. They started first against our side of the square, but our fire turned them on to the Heavies' corner, where they broke in. I was on No. 2 face: the enemy killed a great many of the Heavies, but we still went on firing with our backs to No. 1 face, so they could not get at us well on account of the camels. By degrees they began to waver, and, thank God, they began to fall back, when, between ourselves, I thought it was all up.”

Nothing could possibly be finer than the behaviour of our men in the boats, in their trying marches through the desert (before Abu Klea they had marched fifty-two miles without water), and in battle; but we regret to observe there has been a disposition on the part of certain writers, for the purpose of discrediting short service, to attribute our heavy loss of officers to the fact that the men, as young soldiers, were not to be trusted. The insinuation is a calumny. The fighting of our men at Tamai and Abu Klea, where they were heavily handicapped by the formation adopted—jammed together in frightful confusion, with hundreds of Arab spearmen pouring like water through one open side of the square—could not have been beaten by any soldiers either of ancient or modern days.

“No thought was there of dastard flight;
Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well.”

Among other consequences resulting from the fall of Khartoum, there is every reason to believe that Russia has been encouraged in her present aggressive attitude,

immediately by our embarrassments in the Soudan, and generally by the whole tenor of Indian administration under our present Government, whose course has been persistently to minimise, if not to repudiate, our responsibilities in Afghanistan as in other parts of the world. A cruel fate seems to pursue Mr Gladstone. His inclinations and first decisions have always been to retreat from everything; but every retreat has been invariably followed by an advance again, undertaken under more adverse conditions; and the English taxpayers will discover, from their experiences in every part of the world, that the general "fall back" policy of the Liberal Government does not pay. In India, Mr Gladstone stopped the construction of our nearly completed railway leading towards Kandahar, which Lord Beaconsfield had commenced, and has already been obliged to stultify himself by resuming the prosecution of his rival's work. He gave up all claim to our having a resident envoy at Cabul; and he abandoned Kandahar when in our possession, which city we may shortly be obliged to reoccupy. In justice it must be said, however, that our present influence with the Afghans and our general position in their country, will probably be all the stronger now than if we had continued to hold that fortress even with the consent of their ruler. It is worthy of note here, that it was a Liberal Government that withdrew the yearly subsidy England had paid to Shere Ali—a brilliant piece of economy, which threw that ruler into the arms of Russia, and occasioned our last Afghan wars. And a Liberal Government has now been obliged to restore the subsidy to Shere Ali's successor.

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WHY HAVE WE NO PROPER ARMAMENT ?

At the present moment, when every sinew of the national strength is being strained in urgent preparation for war, when the most strenuous pressure is being put upon every department of our military service, it must be with no little amount of anxiety that we wait to see how our resources can respond to the call. It is only at such a juncture that we can appreciate at its proper value the efficiency of those great departments of the military and naval service which absorb in times of peace so much of the public money, and which, in time of war always demand a large further expenditure before they can place themselves in a position to be of any service to the nation in case of an emergency. Taxpayers must have been painfully struck by the backward condition in which the present crisis in Central Asia found all those branches of the service whose function is to provide the *matériel* of war ; and whatever issue the Afghan complication may result in, the question must press home upon the public. How have long years of comparative peace,

and of large expenditure, been utilised in providing for the military and naval security of British power ? Let us take a retrospect of the working of one of our most important branches of the military service, and mark what answer it suggests to the question.

Great Britain is without any efficient heavy guns. This startling statement has been made to us on the best possible authority. We are assured that our fleets and our coast defences, our harbours and our dockyards,—on the efficiency of which our existence as a nation depends,—are armed with weapons distinctly inferior to those of foreign Powers. It is not too much to say that we stand in this matter much in the same position as all Europe stood towards Prussia when Colonel Hozier's letters from the seat of war in 1866 revealed to us the overmastering superiority of the breech-loader in the hands of infantry. This information is given us, not as an accusation, but as a confession. It does not come from cavilling in-

ventors, zealous for some neglected improvement of their own. It rests upon a statement, made in the presence of the Secretary of State for War, by the very men who are charged with the duty of providing us with guns. The truth is, that for years we have been staking, so to speak, our national existence on the theories of one or two of our own experts against the belief of the whole Continent, and of the majority of our own artillerymen. For years "Woolwich,"—that is, a very small set of officials,—upheld a system in two respects peculiar to itself. It believed in the superiority of muzzle-loading as applied to large ordnance, and it upheld the advantages of its own system of manufacture against the steel ordnance perfected by Krupp and others. On both points it has at length given way. But as Colonel Maitland, the present superintendent of the gun-factories, confesses, the effects of our blundering have been that we are at least some four or five years in arrear of all other Powers in the manufacture of effective ordnance.¹ There is, however, it appears, comfort in store for us. We have, it seems, arrived at a model of gun-manufacture so perfect that we have only to spend vast sums of money upon new plant and new guns, and to keep out of all quarrels for some years, in order to be in a position of decided superiority once more.

We are very glad to hear that there is a prospect of future excellence; but we must frankly confess that, before we launch into the enormous expenditure which we have been asked to incur, we should like to have some satisfactory

guarantee that we are to have our money's worth for our money. It is not possible to exaggerate the importance of this question to us of all the nations upon earth. To foreign Powers the greater or less superiority of their fleets, and of the great guns with which they are armed, is a matter of power, of prestige, of influence. For us it is a question not merely of the maintenance of empire, but of the food by which our population is to be kept alive.

Great as we assume the blessings and advantages which free trade has conferred upon us to be, it has unquestionably entailed upon us this tremendous necessity. We must "rule the waves," not merely, as the national anthem has it, that "Britons" never may "be slaves," but in order that Britons may not starve. From India, from America, and from Australia, come now our great supplies of wheat. We cannot afford, even for a single year of war, to incur the risks through which we passed during the time of the great siege of Gibraltar. Then, though for a considerable period England by no means ruled the waves, we could afford to wait, to recover ourselves, to gather fresh force, and to dissipate the victorious squadrons of our enemies by the fleets which we were at length able to launch against them. Now, we cannot afford to wait at all. To an extent which we hardly yet realise, the whole wealth of England is upon the seas. Our vast commercial fleets must be everywhere and on every sea protected by vessels of war, if there be so much as the risk of an attack on them being attempted.

¹ "The Heavy Guns of 1884." A Lecture delivered at the United Service Institution, 19th June 1884, Lord Hartington in the chair, by Colonel E. Maitland, R. A., Superintendent, Royal Gun Factory, Woolwich.

1885.]

Why have we no Proper Armament?

The experience of the American civil war, when the whole vast carrying trade of America passed into our hands, and has never since been recovered by her, tells heavily against the notion that by the utmost exertions we could regain our trade if once it passed out of our keeping.

Schemes have no doubt been devised for enabling our merchant fleets to some extent to protect themselves, by placing a certain number of guns on board a few of the ships. But if the guns we have to supply them with are of inferior power, even this resource fails us. While, therefore, we hail with pleasure the efforts which some of our younger politicians, and Mr. Arnold Foster more especially, have made to direct attention to the vital importance of a searching inquiry into the relation which at present exists between our naval strength and the amount of work which it has to do, we cannot but regard this question of our ordnance as one even more vital than that of the numerical adequacy of our armoured ships. It affects all the serious questions with which, apart from that of a successfully accomplished invasion of these islands, we have to deal in considering our national position of security. If our guns are inferior, our home harbours are no longer defensible. If our guns are inferior, the coaling-stations, on which the efficiency alike of our steam navy and of our vast steam mercantile marine depends, neither are, nor can be made within any reasonable period, secure. If our guns are inferior, there is nothing to protect us from that terrible danger on which the eyes of all who look forward a little have long been fixed,—viz., that some fine morning, shortly after the outbreak of war, we shall

wake up to hear that a fast-sailing cruiser has seized one of our coaling-stations, filled up her bunkers with all she could carry, set fire to the rest, thus securing herself against pursuit, and passing from station to station, repeating the same operation, has crippled for an indefinite period alike our commerce and our naval action. If our guns are inferior, it is in vain for Sir Thomas Brassey to assure us that the hulks of all our ships taken together displace more water than those of any other Power. The hulks, in such a case, are only the larger target for the superior weapons of an enemy.

All these points which we have discussed are absolutely independent of the vexed question of the nature of the next great naval action, whether guns, or rams, or torpedoes are to be the determining element. Even as to that we may safely say that the most vigorous advocate of rams or of torpedoes would feel an exceeding unwillingness to go into action against a fleet armed with a formidable artillery, unless he had, in addition to his rams and torpedoes, guns of equal power with those of his enemies, if not the mightiest and most manageable that can be provided.

We insist thus earnestly on the importance of this question, because, from the continual progress of invention, from the way in which again and again what seemed the most perfect form of gun has been replaced by a better, there is apt to come over the public mind a weariness of the whole subject, a sense of being continually plagued by contending inventors and by technical details, till sleepiness creeps over us, and we willingly leave to constituted authority all responsibility for the determination of a matter

in which our most vital interests are involved. If we were satisfied that our authorities for determining this matter were so constituted that it could be safely left in their hands, we should be well content to await the result. We believe very little in the wisdom of a rush of public opinion relieving authority of its necessary responsibility. We believe very little in the possibility of technical details being thrashed out to any advantage under ordinary circumstances by writers in the public press. But the case is different, if there be reason to fear that on matters of the broadest principle, on points on which every intelligent Englishman can judge for himself, we have been for a long time going utterly astray. After years of careful watching and some troublesome investigation, we have come slowly to the conviction that this is so ; that we cannot rely upon the nature and mode of investigation which is applied at present to the question of our proper national armament. We are convinced that there are vital defects, the danger of which an experience of more than twenty years has demonstrated, in the mode in which our authorities in this matter are constituted. We believe that the time has come when a searching public investigation of the whole matter is absolutely necessary, and the purpose of this article is to show cause why—precisely because we believe with Colonel Maitland that the necessity for a very costly rearmament is upon us—we ought not to expend one penny upon it, until, before either a Parliamentary

Committee or a very strong Royal Commission, the whole subject has been thoroughly thrashed out.

It happens most opportunely that a Commission has quite recently reported to the President of the United States upon this very subject—the right method of securing a proper armament.¹ The American Government, having now virtually paid off the vast debt which the civil war entailed upon them, have decided that the time has come when they should no longer efface themselves as a military and naval power. Accordingly, as a preliminary step, recognising that paramount importance which attaches to this matter of the provision of a proper supply of guns, they decided to have an inquiry made as to the best system which a nation can adopt in order to obtain a proper supply of the best form of ordnance. A Board was constituted, with Rear-Admiral E. Simpson as president, and five other officers representing the Navy, the Ordnance, the Engineers, and the Artillery, as members. An Act of Congress was approved on March 3, 1883, which declared that the Board was created

“for the purpose of examining and reporting to Congress which of the navy yards or arsenals owned by the Government has the best location and is best adapted for the establishment of a Government foundry, or what other method, if any, should be adopted for the manufacture of heavy ordnance adapted to modern warfare, for the use of the army and navy of the United States ; the cost of all buildings, tools, and implements necessary to be used in the manufacture thereof, including the cost of a steam-hammer or apparatus of sufficient size for the manufacture of the heaviest guns.”

¹ Report of Gun Foundry Board, 48th Congress, U.S.A., 1st Session. Forwarded in a Message of February 18, 1884, to the Senate and House of Representatives, by President Arthur.

Intrusted with this mandate, these officers proceeded on a tour of inspection throughout Europe; and we have no hesitation in saying that the report they have produced upon the condition of artillery in the several States of the Old World is one which, in every respect, does honour to the selection made by President Arthur. It is a document which no European Government can afford to despise. It lays down principles of such manifest wisdom and such plain common sense, that one only marvels that they should in this year 1885 require to be stated. The criticisms they apply to the systems at present in vogue in Europe is of course much more guarded than their general statement of principles. One has to read a little between the lines in order to judge of the full force of the feeling which dictated them. Men who had had the advantage of inspecting government, and, with a few exceptions, private manufactories everywhere, could scarcely put into black and white all that they thought. And yet there are trenchant criticisms, which require only to be applied to facts, otherwise known to form a very serious indictment against the system which we in England have hitherto pursued.

We propose to set forth first the general conclusions at which they have arrived before we touch upon any special criticisms they have applied to our own methods. We think that these will startle our readers, rather because they seem too obvious for argument than by any great originality; but inasmuch as they are founded upon an elaborate examination of the history of the subject in each country of Europe, and are based upon the disastrous experience of such as have taken a wrong course, we cannot afford to pass them by.

The central principle of the Board's report is, that it is essential to encourage, develop and gain for the service of the country the whole of the manufacturing power and inventive talent of the country itself. As they put it, they consider "that every inducement should be offered to attract the private industries of the country to the aid of the Government, in providing ordnance for the army and navy, and that the steel manufacturers should be called upon to provide the material." They hold and maintain strongly that, in order to do this with safety and efficiency, the Government must have, and ought to have, factories of its own "to perform the work of establishing standards, making experimental guns and fabricating cannon upon a moderate scale." The sole purpose of this, however, is to save the Government from being in any way slavishly in the hands of the manufacturers, who might combine to dictate terms if there were no check upon them. They insist, as for years our own navy has most rightly yet vainly insisted, upon the grave and manifest inconveniences which arise from the manufacture of naval guns being in the hands of the same department with those for the army. They wish for *factories* for both navy and army; but on such a merely expansive and experimental scale that this division shall entail neither competition nor additional cost. But they go on: "With Government gun-factories established for both the army and the navy, there will still be needed *the hearty co-operation of the private industries of the country. This cannot be aroused unless there is held out to them a fair prospect of remuneration.*"

The Board does not approve of a partnership in business between

the Government and private firms. All history warns against such a course. But it does believe that "joint, and at the same time independent, action between them, can be made to work harmoniously towards the common national purpose."

The Commissioners show clearly that the only mode by which adequate remuneration can be offered to private firms is that of granting them remunerative contracts on the condition of fulfilling specified terms.

They again and again warn Congress against certain risks. They dread the danger which was disclosed by the experience of France at a time

"when the Government foundries were the sole source of supply of the armament of the country; the officers charged with the work formed a close corporation; their action was never exposed to the public; their ideas were never subjected to criticism; the ingenuity and inventive talent of the country were ignored and resisted, and no precaution was thought necessary to provide a supply in case of need of rearmament." "The result," they continue, "is well known: a great crisis came; the Government works were inadequate to meet the additional demands made on them; and the patriotic efforts of private establishments were inadequate to produce all the material that was needed."

Whereupon France absolutely altered that system, which we retain exactly as it is there described to this hour. We are bound to say that never had a nation better justification for adopting that system at the time she did so than France had. A French artillery officer—then Lieut.-Colonel Truille de Beaulieu—had, after years of contempt and neglect, introduced an

improvement into the whole manufacture of artillery, which had proved its efficiency most brilliantly in the campaign of 1859. For the moment nothing could have been better than to leave to a man of originality and genius the complete working out of his own ideas. It was only when the dull routine of office settled down over the arsenals of France that the obscurantist *regime* began, and led up to those fatal evils which the Commissioners have so faithfully chronicled.

Twenty years ago, an article in the 'Edinburgh Review' on "The Rifled Ordnance of France and England," contained the following passage:—

"We must say, from the evidence and minutes before us, that the professional Ordnance Committee appears to have contributed nothing whatever to the progress of the science, and to have confined its operations to giving a ready assent to the propositions of Sir W. Armstrong (who indeed was at one time a member of the Board), and a very scant hearing to everybody else."

It is much more difficult now than it was then to trace the responsibility of the various bodies which contribute to the ultimate decision of that which appears before the public in the person of Mr Brand, as "Surveyor-General of the Ordnance," and is called "the Department of the Director-General of Artillery." What was obscure twenty years ago is darkness now, yet sufficient evidence is before us to show that the same characteristics have continued throughout the whole interval. The general representatives of the "ingenuity and inventive talent of the country" have received "a very scant hearing" indeed. "The

¹ Edinburgh Review, vol. cxix. p. 480.

ready assent to the propositions of Sir William Armstrong," has been the characteristic feature of the whole period.

This brings us to the second danger, against which the United States Commissioners emphatically and with constant iteration warn their Government. And forasmuch as we would be thought to have gone of late on another tack, courtesy permits them to take England as an example of what to avoid.

"As examples," they say, "of a practical partnership between a Government and a private company in working towards a national object, the experiences in England, and in Russia are very instructive, and warn against the adoption of such a system. In England the Government, in addition to paying during several years very high prices for articles delivered, was forced to pay £85,000 to close an agreement; while the company, besides the profits on manufacture, came into possession of a complete working plant at a merely nominal valuation."

It is obvious that, however great may be the evils of such a copartnership between a Government and a private firm when the conditions of the partnership are public and above-board, those evils become incalculably greater when the firm is a nominally independent body, competing with other manufacturers in the country, while at the same time men, closely connected with the firm, are virtually accepted as Government advisers in relation to matters of contract. During part of the period which has elapsed since the termination of the copartnership between Sir W. Armstrong and the Government, it is beyond dispute that some members of the firm—Cap-

tain Noble certainly, if not —acted not merely as Government advisers, but as members of the actual body which practically determined the issue of contracts,—the one which gave the scientific decision on all questions of ordnance. During the greater portion of the time, and up to this hour, a mysterious connection has unquestionably existed between the firm and the department, probably unknown to successive Governments. The practical power which it has exercised, through Mr Rendel at the Admiralty, through Captain Noble at the War Office, and the strong presumption that has been established of other channels of influence, distinctly call for public investigation. We are far from charging either Captain Noble or Mr. Rendel with any conscious act of unfairness in behalf of the firm of which one is an active member, and of which the other recently has been. But we do say that the whole condition of things is unsatisfactory, and that the sooner a system is established which enables us to call on Captain Noble and Mr. Rendel as valuable witnesses, whose evidence may be fairly sifted, with that of others, and the sooner these gentlemen cease virtually to act as judges in their own cause, or at least to approach most unpleasantly near to that unsatisfactory position, the better it will be for the credit of our form of government, and the sooner shall we arrive at a means by which to encourage the general manufacturing power, and inventive talent of the country to provide us with proper artillery.

We have been inveighing against a "system of obscurantism." We wish carefully to guard ourselves

See the conclusive proof of this in the cross-examination of Captain Noble in the case of *Thomas v. Regina* cited afterwards.

from misinterpretation. We sympathise in the complaint that we are the only people who publish our experiments in gunnery in the newspapers. We object to the system of providing foreign Powers at our expense with all that the best wit of England can provide. We have not forgotten those numerous instances which teach us that "the real efficiency of the guns of the other Powers will only be known when they are engaged in war." We have not forgotten that the Red Republicans of 1848, breaking into the arsenals of Berlin, disclosed the fact—till then utterly unknown—that Prussia had secretly prepared a complete equipment of rifle small-arms for her troops at a time when no other nation dreamed of any such armament. We have not forgotten that in 1864 Prussia was practically experimenting in the Danish campaign with that "Zünd-Nadel-Gewehr," with which she had silently armed her troops; and that the haughty political conduct towards Austria, which immediately followed that experiment, was mainly due to the confidence which the successful result had inspired. But we find in the voluminous correspondence of the Ordnance Department with private inventors, that the whole principle of our recent action has been to encourage English inventors to go to foreign Powers with their wares before they have been tested in England, and to discourage, in an almost incredible degree, any patriotic wish on the part of individual Englishmen, or even English officers, to restrict to their own country the first use of their inventions.

In case after case we find, to the infinite credit of individuals, that the patriotic wish to sacrifice pos-

sible personal gains rather than put into the hands of foreign Powers weapons that may be used with dangerous effect against English sailors or soldiers, has been an efficient operative influence. Nothing could be more satisfactory as a refutation of the cynicism which assumes that such feelings no longer exist amongst us. Nothing, alas! seems to us more disgraceful than the mode in which the very men who are specially trusted with safeguarding the national interests have applied the purely commercial principle, and with a reckless cynicism, rather than themselves be at the trouble to give inventions a fair test, have recommended the inventors to apply to foreign Powers, or have patented the very invention brought to them for secret use, thus blurting out to the world the very confidence which would have added greatly to the immediate power of England had it been loyally kept. We believe we are supported by all military authority when we say that it is scarcely possible to estimate the practical effect in war of some apparently trivial improvement in the armament or the equipment of the soldiers of one country, not possessed by another. It is not merely the physical, it is far more the moral effect that has to be considered. The old story of the effect of the iron ramrods of the Prussians in causing the victories of Frederick the Great, is true in principle to this day. It was not that the mere physical advantage directly produced the result; but the soldiers, who found that they were better equipped acquired a confidence, the worse equipped soldiers felt a discouragement; and the difference in moral condition of the two

¹ This comes out in a remarkable way in the case of Major Moncrieff.

determined on which standards winged victory should rest.

It was in a great degree the same with the carronades, which helped Nelson in his most dashing exploits. The carronades were not by any means first-rate guns, but they were a little better for practical purposes than any the French had. After a few trials, both our men and the French came to know this well; and the fact needs to be taken into account, as one of the effective causes which sent our men into every action with the certainty of victory, and taught the French sailors to anticipate defeat.

Who, then, has the right to deprive the navy of England of any even trifling advantage with which the genius of our country can furnish it?

What servant of the Crown has the right to say that foreign Powers may keep secret what inventions and improvements they will, but that for English committees and English departments it is too much trouble to sift, by careful examination, the wheat from the chaff, to give to all comers a patient and courteous hearing, and to try what can be learnt from every one?

We confess it seems to us that there has gradually crept in here a disastrous misconception. We have run a principle, founded upon a speech of Lord Palmerston, possibly in the main sound, into all kinds of deductions that have no connection with it. Many years ago, Lord Palmerston, defending the principle of allowing our manufacturers to supply foreign Powers with military stores, cited, as an illustration of the advantages of the system, the time when the Israelites had to go down to the Philistines to sharpen every man "his share, and his coulter, and

his axe, and whether the principle or times was not at that time a factory one, though they allow their enemies to improve their weapons among them. No, in so far as we ourselves retain plant for making weapons for other nations, it is no doubt we shall probably gain more by developing our own warlike weapons at the expense of other countries; but we are unwilling to see how the principle is applied in Lord Palmerston's illustration affords a justification for our positively urging our own inventors to lay their plans before foreign Governments before we try them. Yet that is what, in case after case, we have done. Indeed Colonel Maitland's lecture consists throughout of a report of the mode in which we have, as he puts it, "ooming last, taken the best" from each of the inventions adopted by foreign Powers. The Woolwich foreman, whose speech is reported in the discussion which followed Colonel Maitland's lecture, supplied a significant comment. He, wishing to the utmost to glorify his own department, showed conclusively how servilely Woolwich has followed the lead of foreign manufacturers; how absolutely all principle, and science, and exhaustive investigation have been neglected; how afraid Woolwich has been during all this time of any independent judgment or any examination of the real merits of a question; how all that we had to trust to has been a kind of workshop knowledge, and a feeble assumption that, if other Powers did not adopt a certain improvement, we need be in no hurry to do so. Never has Woolwich realised the truth that the real efficiency of the guns and other warlike instruments of other Powers will be

known only when they are engaged in war.

We have not yet received the report of the Parliamentary Committee which sat to investigate the working of the Commissariat of the Egyptian campaign. But two things are notorious: first, that the appointment of a committee was most unwelcome to the parliamentary heads of departments; secondly, that a condition of things and a system were disclosed which required exposure and condemnation at all costs.¹

Surely the moral of all this is, that it is in the nature of things impossible for the parliamentary heads of departments to sift out for themselves grave abuses and serious derelictions of duty among their immediate subordinates; and it follows that they are still less able to judge fairly whether some immediate subordinate of their own has or has not acted fairly towards an outsider; still less, again, are they able to judge fairly whenever the question lies between their department and some outsider with whom it has become involved, as departments must occasionally be, in a dispute.

We are sorry to open up an old sore, but the present case is one of such vast importance that we must do so. We wish to show how completely in the past the Ordnance Department itself has become involved in the defence of direct and unmistakable wrongdoing by individuals, and how little as yet they have learned

from that shameful experience.

On 29th April 1870, Sir John Pakington, referring to a dispute in which he had committed himself to the defence of Colonel Boxer, R. A., an officer who had held the appointment of Superintendent of the Royal Laboratory, said in the House of Commons, as he withdrew from the case:—

“I could not have supposed it possible that a colonel in the Royal Artillery, a man classed as an officer and a gentleman, and holding a high official situation in a Government department, would attempt to practise upon me what I can only describe as a gross deception. It was not the *suggestio falsi* so much as the *suppressio veri*; and I am not ashamed to say I believed his statements.”

Now it happened that in that instance the person injured by the Superintendent of the Royal Laboratory was a wealthy and influential gunmaker who could not easily be crushed. He succeeded, after years of snubbing and refusal of all investigation,² in forcing his case upon the personal attention of Sir John Pakington. He also adduced proofs in black and white which did not admit of contradiction.

The result was, of course, inevitable. Mr. Cardwell, who had succeeded to Sir John Pakington, with the full approval of the latter, called on the Superintendent of the Laboratory to resign. It is with regret that we have felt compelled to allude to such a matter. The offence imputed to Colonel Boxer was expiated by his dismissal; but without reference to

¹ See the pamphlet published by Dr. Cameron (who moved for the Committee), entitled ‘A Romance of War; or, How the Cash goes in Campaigning,’ founded on the evidence taken by the Committee.

² Mr. Daw has now the complete set of papers on this subject. We ourselves have worked them out from the Parliamentary Reports and the numerous indignant articles in the ‘Times’ and other newspapers of the time in which the facts were at last exposed.

his case it would be impossible to appreciate the extent to which the Ordnance Department is swayed by partiality and obscurantism. Will it be believed that the very department which had been thus implicated immediately afterwards accepted the late superintendent's evidence in his own case as conclusive proof that he had not repeated in a fresh instance the very thing he had just been accused of doing in the instance of Mr Daw—that is to say, gives a colourable answer which evaded the issue, and left the impression described in the above quotation on the Secretary of State, who accepted his statements? Such a thing ought not to be believed if conclusive evidence of the fact had not been set forth unanswerably in a published parliamentary paper.¹ For the benefit of our readers we will tell the story which this paper reveals as briefly as we can.

In the year 1856, a young subaltern of the Royal Fusiliers—Mr Hope—designed an improvement in “shrapnel-shells,” which should adapt them to rifled guns, and should at the same time obviate certain grave disadvantages in the old form of shrapnel, which he had observed whilst on service in the Crimea. He was a Cambridge man of sound mathematical training, and he devoted a period of enforced leisure to working out the problem.

That he had worked out the problem, made his improved shell, and submitted it to the Ordnance Department in 1856, does not rest merely on his own statement; for on page 13 of the correspondence referred to below,¹ we have a War Office letter to Mr Hope, enclosing “a drawing to scale of the shell which you submitted for

the consideration of her Majesty's War Department in 1856.” This drawing was taken from a shell actually then, and we suppose now, in the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich, which had been lying there since 1856. In 1864 the officer who had been Superintendent of the Royal Laboratory for the whole period since 1856, patented an improved shrapnel-shell in his own name. We have here in this parliamentary paper the legal opinion on the principle and detail of these two shells,—given by Mr Grove, now Mr Justice Grove, the inventor of “Grove's Battery,” an authority on questions of Patent law unsurpassed by any member of the Bar or the Bench—and by Mr T. Aston, also eminent as a Patent lawyer. As between the two inventions, their opinion is clear that the distinctive features which give their value to the one, were adopted in the other in 1856 and 1864; and that if Mr Hope had taken out a patent for his shell, the patent granted for the other would have been bad. Their opinion is positive and unhesitating. And if that were not enough, there is an independent opinion to precisely the same effect from two other eminent lawyers—Mr J. H. Lloyd, and Mr Young, then Lord Advocate of Scotland.

What was the answer of the Ordnance Department in this case? Will it be believed that the only answer of any kind which they offer is a letter from the person implicated, denying the charge, and in the teeth of the Secretary of State's remarks in the matter of Mr Daw, actually asserting that “throughout his professional career” he had “taken special care to give no ground for the accusation that he had pirated other men's ideas”?

¹ See ‘Return to the House of Lords on the “Boxer Shrapnel” Shell.’

"I have acted thus," he goes on to say, "because I have always regarded the appropriation of another man's ideas with special contempt; and secondly, because I have been fully alive to the fact that an inventor, in the position I occupied for so many years, was peculiarly liable to such unjustifiable attacks as those made on me by Mr Hope in his letter, by would-be and unsuccessful inventors."

This letter, forwarded by the then Director-General of Ordnance, whose late official head, one month later,¹ publicly announced in the House of Commons that he could not have believed that this very man could have practised on him a "gross deception," as he asserted that he had done—is actually accepted as final and conclusive evidence in his own defence. Nor is that all; for it is held to be evidence so conclusive, that the Ordnance Department declines altogether to listen to Mr Hope's offer, if any investigation be made, to produce before it the evidence of those who saw his shell taken to pieces, carefully examined, and placed in charge of the Superintendent of the Royal Arsenal.

Not only is this the answer of the superintendent, and relied upon once (page 8); but on every subsequent occasion (page 10, 12, *ibis*, 13, 15, 18) down to the 12th April 1871, a year after Sir J. Pakington's speech, this letter is

gravely appealed to as having absolutely settled the matter.²

But how did this arise? Was it the same Secretary of State who said a "gross deception" had been practised on him, who afterwards accepted the evidence of the person charged with it in his own case as a final answer, closing all necessity for further inquiry? By no means. The Secretary of State who had been deceived was Sir John Pakington. He passed out of office. Mr Cardwell succeeded him. Mr Cardwell doubtless had not personally become acquainted with the details of the case of Mr Daw, though he had himself finally dismissed the superintendent; and, as appears from the papers, he left the matter in dispute respecting the shell in the hands of the officials of the Ordnance Department.

But then comes the grievous part of the whole story. Why was it that Mr Hope had not patented the invention of his shrapnel-shell in 1856? When we are speaking of motives, only one man can give evidence,—the man who acts upon them; and we are bound to say that we ourselves distinctly believe, and believe also that any intelligent person would believe, the story which Mr Hope tells in these papers on this subject.

Mr Hope says that when, in 1856, he communicated to the superintendent the nature of his proposed improvement, he was convinced that, if rifled guns were

¹ Nearly all the facts must have been known in the office for many months, but it will be seen that the same defence is relied on long after Sir J. Pakington's speech.

² "Boxer Shrapnel" Shell. Return to an Address of the House of Lords, dated 25th July 1873, for "Copies of correspondence in 1870-71 between the authorities at the War Office and Mr Hope, V.C., late of the 7th Royal Fusiliers, relative to the shell adopted into the service, and officially known as the Boxer Shrapnel, which Mr Hope claims to be his invention, and substantially identical with a shell deposited by himself in charge of the late Superintendent of the Royal Laboratory, Woolwich Arsenal, in December, 1856."

adopted, as he was sure that they would be adopted, the improvement in the power of our artillery would be so great, that in any campaign, we became engaged in, we should, if we kept it to ourselves, and did not announce it to all the world as a patent, be in a position of superiority such as the Prussians acquired by their exclusive use of breech-loaders.

Nor, considering that the improvement in shrapnel, of which Mr Hope was thus manifestly the inventor, has been adopted by every army in Europe; that the artillery feature of the war of 1870 was the decisive effect of the new shrapnel as compared with all other forms of artillery action; that, according to the dispatches of Lord Wolseley, it was the shrapnel we were using with our troops in 1882 which alone gave to our artillery its decisive superiority over the admirably served artillery of the Egyptian army,—can this opinion of Mr Hope's be considered to have been exaggerated.

For all the so-called "improvements" introduced into the shell brought forward in 1856 by Mr Hope have since been discarded; and the only difference in the most modern form of shell from the pattern of 1856 is due to the perfection to which the manufacture of steel has since been brought, permitting of a thinner case than was shown in that model. We have said that we believe, and that we feel confident that every unprejudiced person who reads these papers will be convinced, that this is the perfectly natural and only possible explanation of Mr. Hope's conduct at the time—viz., that he confided in one Government official, who, if he listened to him, and acted with entire loyalty, could introduce into the service of the country an improve-

ment of the greatest importance, and could do so without allowing foreign Governments to be aware of the nature of the improvement introduced; and for this reason alone he did not patent his invention. But let us for a moment's sake assume that this is not so,—that Mr Hope from neglect failed to patent the invention which was afterward adopted. Even in this case there can be no kind of doubt that his shell was, during all the time between 1856 and 1864, left in official custody. And what we urge is this, that if a Government official has been shown to have been in possession for eight years of an unpatented invention, and at the end of that time patents an invention which, in the judgment of the best experts on such subjects, is virtually a mere copy of the earlier model, there is a *prima facie* case for investigation of so strong a character, that the refusal by the public department for which the official has acted, of all public investigation, is a public wrong,—a wrong done to her Majesty and to the nation, much more than to any individual. If, according to the sound principles laid down by the American Commissioners, it is vitally important to the interests of a country that the inventive talent and manufacturing power of the country itself should be brought into the service of the nation, what course can be so fatal as that which is here described?

It must be remembered that Mr Hope, by abstaining from patenting his invention, deprived himself of any legal remedy. Therefore it was worse than irrelevant on the part of the department to treat the question as a private one and nothing more. Mr Hope's only chance of justice lay in an impartial investigation being made.

"All that I desire, he says, "is a perfectly impartial judicial investigation in broad daylight into the accusation which I have brought against a man who at this moment holds the distinguished position of a major-general in the British army, of making an improper use of his former confidential position.

"I brought this accusation plainly and straightforwardly, in the very first sentences of my first letter of the 12th January 1870. I have never shrunk from or tried to qualify it, and it is supported by circumstantial evidence so strong as to amount to complete *prima facie* proof.

"Against all this evidence the late superintendent has offered nothing but his own unsupported assertion." The answer of the department is "to decline to answer the correspondence"!

We have taken these cases of Mr Daw and Mr Hope first, and at some length, partly because we shall have to refer again to matters of the same kind, and partly because, beginning as they do shortly after the Crimean war, and extending to the year 1873, when the correspondence finally closes, they cover one long period of the history of the department. They well, illustrate, moreover, one of the greatest dangers connected with the mode in which questions of this sort are now settled. They show how the change of parliamentary heads tends to place the whole wealth and authority of the nation in the hands of men who are not theoretically supposed to be the persons who wield that power at all. Moreover, they illustrate how a decision given at one time by a parliamentary chief may, when circumstances have altogether changed be treated as if it were a final irreversible decision, though no one man could have made himself responsible for the actual position to which, by the whole history of the case, the

department was logically committed. Nor is this all. There is one peculiarity in the form of the correspondence to which we must take most serious exception, because it illustrates a defect which we have found everywhere in this Ordnance departmental correspondence. We refer to the "beggar upon horseback" tone of all the communications from the Ordnance Department. We find ourselves absolutely unable to account for it. We can only suppose that the letters have been prepared by some clerk, and signed without sufficiently careful perusal. At all events, letter after letter is virtually a mere statement—"We have the power to do you wrong, and having the power, we choose to exercise it."

We cannot otherwise characterise the brief statements "that Sir H. Storks sees no reason for any further investigation," and the like, with which the clearest statements of the strongest case are again and again met, when there has been no "investigation" whatever, but simply, in the very paper referred to as decisive, the statement that "so and so altogether denies" that which is otherwise clearly demonstrated.

In the earlier part of the correspondence, we can easily understand how this should occur, because Mr Hope's own earlier letters have the careless verbosity of a man not specially trained as a lawyer, and who is confident that his case is so strong that he has only to state it in order to obtain redress. In the latter part we are absolutely unable to understand how any department could have ventured, in point of mere form, on such a transparent use of naked power, where their logical dilemma is hopeless. They simply fall back upon that ancient prerogative of

royalty, the "right divine to govern wrong.

We cannot, from sheer lack of space to do them justice, enter fully into one case after another which we have examined, and from which it would be easy to show how persistent, during all the history of the Ordnance Department since the Crimea, has been the mode in which the system has proceeded of snubbing inventors—of recommending them to apply to foreign Governments—of "declining to continue the correspondence" when the department is clearly in the wrong—of adopting improvements without in any way compensating those who introduced them, whether at home or abroad; until at last the department was reduced to depend entirely upon the inventive talent of a close corporation, and upon an indirect alliance with the Elswick firm—an alliance which in itself discourages all others from coming freely forward. Such is the department's knowledge of the actual state of the mechanical skill of the country, that they succeeded a year ago in inducing Lord Hartington, as their representative, to state that the inferiority of English steel manufacture was the excuse for their not having earlier adopted improvements which, years after it ought to have been done, they are now obliged to confess are necessary.

How scandalous a misstatement of fact this charge against our steel manufactures is, appears abundantly from the report of the United States Commissioners, who, after travelling over all Europe and then returning to Sir Joseph Whitworth's works, declare them to be without a rival in the world in this very respect—"a revelation," as they put it.

Moreover, it is transparent that

the fact is here the same as the Commissioners say was the case with France under a similar system,—the manufacturers have not been encouraged to furnish supplies, and therefore their supplies have been inferior to what they would otherwise have been, though by no means so inferior as is represented in the words put into Lord Hartington's mouth. We have before us a letter from one of the Sheffield firms to the Master Cutler at Sheffield, in which it is stated that the largest ingots they have hitherto made "are about forty-five tons," far more than sufficient for any process of Woolwich manufacture; but they continue, "*It was only the want of demand for heavy pieces which delayed our erecting appliances for making them.*" We do not know that, until the present system of obscurantism has been broken through, it would be safe to give the name of the firm from which we quote. But we entreat Lord Hartington to institute a searching inquiry into a matter in which he has been committed to most injurious statements against the manufacture of the country.

As an illustration of one particular error which is somewhat apart from others, and yet of the gravest consequence, we must refer to the case of Colonel Moncrieff. After a great deal of needless delay and unfair treatment, into which it would be beside our purpose to enter, that officer received for an important improvement a probable adequate remuneration. Some fair treatment was for a time forced upon the department by the pressure of public opinion, and by that only. But as soon as the adoption of his carriage had been decided upon in principle, when the public attention was being turned to other matters, the mode in

which the carriage was introduced into the service was of the most unsatisfactory kind. Colonel Moncrieff appears never to have been consulted as to the mode of the execution of his carriages; he was never informed of complaints made against them, or called upon to suggest remedies for them. Carriages have been introduced into many of our forts and called by Colonel Moncrieff's name, which were, in fact, not adopted at his suggestion, and contained a whole series of defects which he could have remedied. Yet, when the annual reports of trials came in, he was not informed of the failure of the carriages he had objected to. Again, it will be easily intelligible to any one, that in a case like that of Colonel Moncrieff's carriage, with the principle of which many of our readers are familiar, everything depends upon nice adjustment. Colonel Moncrieff's principle consists in utilizing the recoil of the gun in such a way, that, after it has been fired, the gun is made to descend behind a parapet, so that the gunners are never exposed, as is the case with all embrasure or barbette batteries. Now it is obvious that the value of this principle depends entirely upon the accuracy with which the recoil is so arranged that the projectile shall leave the bore before the gun begins to recoil. If the gun begins to recoil too soon, the flight of the projectile is injuriously affected. Now we have the strongest reasons for believing—and our information is not derived from Colonel Moncrieff himself—that in those forts in which Colonel Moncrieff's system and his adjustment have been fully adopted, the results have been most satisfactory as to accuracy of firing as well as in other respects; but that in other forts, the adjustment has been so carelessly

made, under direction other than that of Colonel Moncrieff, that the flight of the projectile becomes hopelessly uncertain. Yet the experiments at these latter forts are supposed to be experiments with Colonel Moncrieff's carriage, and are not known to the officers who conduct the annual practice to be other than Colonel Moncrieff's own; so that his invention is discredited in the minds of artillery officers, by results for which not he, but the Ordnance Department itself, is responsible.

Now, supposing that by any accident there had crept into a public department, in some of its lower grades, unscrupulous men, who wished for their own purposes to discredit a man in Colonel Moncrieff's position, is it not obvious what facilities would thus be placed within their reach? The reports "on Colonel Moncrieff's carriage" could be used as conclusive evidence against him, and in favour of trusting to the department itself. We do not say that anything of the kind has actually happened. We do say that the feeling prevalent everywhere about this department—prevalent among many artillery officers to whom we have spoken, as well as among the manufacturers and inventors who have come into personal relations with it—is that the system of obscurantism, which we have described, raises such a cloud of suspicion that nothing short of positive proof can dispel it. The officials in this, as in other matters, are not above suspicion, and above suspicion they ought to be.

So far we have, in regard to Colonel Moncrieff, referred to the treatment of the system he originally introduced as the Counterweight Carriage. But there is a long count against the Ord-

nance Department for their treatment of an adaptation of that system, known as the Hydro-pneumatic Carriage.' The story is too long to tell in full. We will only say, therefore, that the extent to which the country has suffered by the persistent treatment of a man who had been acknowledged officially to have rendered the greatest service by his earlier invention, has been so serious, that during a discussion in the United Service Institution, the calm of that most orderly, and, if we may say so without offence of a most valuable public body, *prim* and undemonstrative assembly, was broken by such exclamations as these from venerable and experienced admirals and generals:—

"If there is some shadowy power or department behind, which prevents the recommendations of the most scientific committees being listened to, I know that whatever that power may be it constitutes the greatest real danger that a nation can suffer from. It must be recollected that in a matter of this kind John Bull submits for a long time to deception; but he is very apt to get angry after a long course of it—particularly if it is accompanied by incapacity, either in his servants or in his governors—and that anger is unmistakably shown."

How little any object of national economy was the cause of this treatment of Colonel Moncrieff may be judged by a statement of Mr Anderson, C.E., which represents a fact frequently repeated in many of these cases: "The Ordnance Department undoubtedly had the opportunity of trying the experiment free of all cost if they had pleased to do so." While Mr Hawksley says: "It is

impossible for a layman to understand why, with committee after committee reporting, as I understand these committees have done, in favour of the Moncrieff system, and recommending that experiments should be tried, no practical step has been taken."

We cannot go at length into this story, but we may say that it is one in which the most deceptive answers have been prepared by the department for Ministers to give in the House of Commons.

After one favourable report upon another had been given by committees, recommending the full trial and presumptive adoption, yet another committee was appointed, with Colonel Campbell as president and a majority of members composed as follows: Two were men who had been energetically engaged in the advocacy of "shields," which would have been superseded had Colonel Moncrieff's system been adopted. A third was one of the very few men who had committed themselves to opposition to Colonel Moncrieff. Nevertheless, the report of even this committee was too favourable to be used for the suppression of Colonel Moncrieff, had the whole case on which they reported been fairly stated. But a garbled force was given to it by the suppression of an important covering letter; and by a technical evasion, the papers which went before the House of Commons, when the correspondence was called for, left an impression that the committee had reported on a different subject from that actually referred to them.

The whole case urgently calls for thorough sifting.

We can only afford time for one

: "The Moncrieff System applied by Hydro-pneumatic Gun-carriages to Harbour Defences," by Colonel A. Moncrieff, C. B., F.R.S. A Lecture delivered in the United Service Institution, April 25, 1884.

other story concerning the general treatment of "the ingenuity and inventive talent of the country," before we pass to the mode in which these principles have been applied in the matter of the actual construction of the guns themselves. We have taken our illustrations hitherto from the "ammunition" or "laboratory" department, and, in Colonel Moncrieff's case, from that of carriages. We will take our next from the vexed question of multiple guns—Gatlings, Nordenfelts, and the like. Whatever our opinion on that subject may be—whether we agree with the very able lecture in which Lord Charles Beresford recently advocated the use of these weapons,¹ or with Colonel Brackenbury's² view, that any advocacy of them is mere folly—we are not here called upon to say. Colonel Brackenbury will agree with Lord Charles Beresford so far as this, that if multiple guns are in any case to be used, we ought, at least, to have the best form of them that we can obtain. Now the curious fate of the Ordnance Department has been such that it decreed that our troops should use in the field an inferior form of Gatling. We have heard the story repeatedly told with much indignation by officers who were engaged in the Zulu campaign. We believe, though in this instance we only speak from broad and general facts of public notoriety, that we shall not be unfair if we state the matter thus. Shortly after the Franco-German war—say about the year 1873-74—the only form of multiple gun in existence was the old Gat-

ling, which was made of a series of barrels, arranged in a circular form, and worked with a handle, so that two circular surfaces had to play against one another when the gun was loaded and fired. At that time the question of the use of Gatlings was referred, by the department, to a very able body of officers. They reported that the Gatling, *in its then form*, might prove very useful in certain special positions, such as the ditches of fortresses, &c., but that it was wholly unadapted to service in the field. The objections to its use were, chiefly, its tendency to jam when loading, and the fact that a special ammunition would be required for it, which would greatly complicate the stores taken into the field. General Sir Edward Hamley, who had been asked separately by Mr Cardwell to report on the mitrailleuse, expressed a somewhat more favourable opinion on these points.

As it is by no means our purpose, in this article, to advocate the claims of any particular inventor, we shall not attempt to decide whether, of the more modern forms of multiple gun, the Gardner, the Hochkiss, or the Nordenfelt is the best. But at all events, a few years later than the report we have spoken of, it was proved, by a series of exhaustive trials at Shoeburyness, that inventions had been introduced which entirely obviated the chief objections which had been raised to the earlier form of Gatling. In one, at any rate, of the forms, a series of the Martini-Henry barrel,

¹ "Machine Guns in the Field." A Lecture delivered at the United Service Institution by Captain the Right Hon. Lord Charles Beresford, R. N., on the 4th of July 1884.

² "Gunpowder considered as the Spirit of Artillery." By Colonel C. B. Brackenbury, R.A., Superintendent, Royal Gunpowder Factory, Waltham Abbey. A Lecture delivered at the United Service Institution, February 29, 1884.

of our infantry soldiers had been arranged side by side, so that by a very simple breech-action the whole could be loaded without a chance of jamming. Thus the objection both as to jamming and to the multiplication of ammunition was overcome.

Yet the Ordnance Department declared that the question had been already decided by the reports on the *old* Gatling—a decision about as reasonable as it would have been to decide that steel pens should never be adopted into the public service, because quills were better than the roughest form of the first idea of a metal pen. The matter was, we have every reason to believe, not again referred to any of the authorities who had pronounced against the old Gatling.

But the quaint part of the story was this. The Admiralty, having a strong wish to obtain, for their purposes, Nordenfolt guns, were unable to get them made or issued to them by the Ordnance Department. They continued to use the Gatlings which they could get. As a sequel: when the Zulu war broke out there was a general cry that for rapid movement into a country where transport was difficult, and against an enemy who habitually moved in dense masses, some form of multiple gun was desirable. The result was, that the old Gatling, which had been condemned, was the only form available, and the one that was actually employed in Zululand. We believe the department were

even themselves obliged to send out some Gatlings to supplement those landed by the Admiralty. A more complete stultification of itself by a department than the use of an avowedly inferior form of weapon, for no other reason than this—that they had condemned all possible improvements of it because in its first form it was a failure—has perhaps never been recorded in any country.

We can only cull these few choice flowers from the rich garden of the blunderings of the department, but we can assure our readers that they are nothing to the bouquet that would be gathered by any searching inquiry.¹

We come now to the question of gun-manufacture itself. Having originally entered into a "practical partnership" with the Elswick firm, we have, since the time when, at heavy cost, we freed ourselves from that bargain, been involved in an indirect and uncertain alliance with the same firm, of such a kind that, partly from this cause, and partly from the fact that we retained all the while the worst evils of the former French system of obscurantism, wrongs of the most grievous kind have resulted. We are about to describe a case which has required very great pains fairly to investigate, and in which, as we are now convinced, more practical injustice has been done than in almost any other—grievous as is the catalogue with which we have had to deal. The case is that of Mr Lynall Thomas.² Before enter-

¹ We hope, in any case, that the two calm and moderate statements by the late Sir William Palliser, a man of the highest honour and character, known as "Memorandum A" and "Memorandum B," regarding the late head of the Artillery Department, Sir F. Campbell, will be called for by any investigating committee and sifted.

² "The Action of Fixed Gunpowder in Guns." Article in the 'Illustrated Naval and Military Magazine,' July 1884, by Mr Lynall Thomas.

Thomas v. The Queen. In the High Court of Justice, Exchequer Division,

ing upon it we must; however, present to our readers a remarkable letter, the intrinsic interest of which will be doubted by no one. It has never before been published. The original, which now lies before us, was obtained for us by a friend from Mr Lynall Thomas, to whom it is addressed.

It is not a little remarkable to find the great apostle of peace so far accepting the inevitable as to discuss the right method by which a nation can provide itself with the weapons of war. But our motive for giving the letter here, and now, is twofold. First, Mr Cobden states it this letter with admirable force the precise position which we ourselves take up with regard to the very distinguished head of the great Elswick firm. Secondly, he carries much further than the United States Commissioners the principle of depending upon the inventive talent and the manufacturing power of the country generally.

It was, of course, to be expected that he would do so. In this paper we are especially anxious to limit ourselves simply to showing that the existing system, as it has been practically worked for the last twenty or five-and-twenty years, is utterly unsatisfactory. We are certain that a searching investigation is necessary, and we think that it is far better to leave it to the investigating body to determine what system

should be for the future pursued by us—whether we adopt the present French system, which, in the judgment of the American Commissioners, is theoretically perfect, or discover some better.

While, therefore, we fully recognise the inconveniences which, as they point out, might arise if there was no State establishment to control and regulate supply, we think that Mr Cobden's view ought very seriously to be considered. We can wish nothing better than that all the Chambers of Commerce in the country would follow his advice, and petition for a searching inquiry into the whole question at the present moment, when in any case vast sums of money must be spent upon supplying us with a proper armament, such as the urgent exigencies of our present situation demand.

Letter from Mr. Cobden.

"MIDHURST, 5th Aug. 1864.

"DEAR SIR,—I have only to-day received your letter and enclosure on my return from London.

"I can easily understand the unfairness to which you are exposed. Armstrong must have been more than a man—he must have been a very angel of disinterestedness and justice—if he could have felt really disposed to favour your success, while his own fame and emolument depended on the triumph of his rival invention. I see no other way of reaching this evil but in the way I proposed—namely, establishing the principle that the Government shall not be its own producer, and then the purchasing

before the Lord Chief Baron (Sir Fitzroy Kelley) and a special jury, 10th February to 10th March 1877.—Transcript of the Shorthand Notes of Messrs Hurst & Hurst, 40 Chancery Lane, W.C.

Thomas v. The Queen. (Before Mr Justice Mellor and Mr. Justice Lush.) Judgment, &c., 25th July 1877.—Transcript of the Shorthand Notes of Messrs Hurst & Hurst, 40 Chancery Lane, W.C.

"Statement of the case of Thomas v. The Queen."

"Mr Lynall Thomas and the Ordnance Department." 'United Service Gazette,' in consecutive weeks from August 1, 1864.

department will have no selfish bias in favour of Government establishments as opposed to private producers. I hope the Chambers of Commerce will take up the subject.—And I remain, yours sincerely,

“R. COBDEN.

“LYNALL THOMAS, Esq.”

The case of Mr Lynall Thomas is this.

More than twenty years ago Mr Thomas communicated to the Ordnance Department certain new ideas and discoveries respecting the explosive action of gunpowder, upon which he founded a new principle in the construction of heavy guns. Not being a manufacturer, he had great difficulty in getting a gun made without flaws, which would adequately represent his principle. Ultimately the department manufactured one for him, he paying the whole cost of it before it was even tried. This gun burst. But as any number of guns made by Sir W. Armstrong had burst without any discredit being thrown on the principle of their construction, it certainly did not lie in the mouths of either the department or the Elswick firm to say that this settled the question against Mr Thomas. To say so was to raise a false issue altogether. Mr Thomas's contention was that the trials of his gun were at any rate so far successful as to establish his principle, and that they actually resulted, as a matter of fact, in its adoption thenceforward in the manufacture of guns both by the Elswick firm and at Woolwich. This the department denied, and they refused to reimburse him for any part of the expense—considerably over £10,000—to which he had been put. According to their usual practice, they had declined to enter into any formal agreement before making the gun and going through the

trials; consequently Mr Thomas could rest his claim to compensation only on the correspondence which had passed, the effect of which was to hold out somewhat vaguely a prospect of reimbursement provided the trials were satisfactory. After repeatedly offering to submit the case to arbitration, he was reluctantly compelled, under the advice of counsel, to bring an action.

The contention really lay between Mr Thomas and the Elswick firm, as to which was the inventor of the principle of the new gun. The question ought in fairness to have been litigated on equal terms between the two. Unfortunately this could not be. Mr Thomas's actual claim was against the Government. Not only had he the purse and the whole power of the War Office, in combination with the Elswick firm, to contend against, but the action being against the Crown, necessarily took the form of a Petition of Right. In a “Petition of Right” the plaintiff, or “suppliant” as he is called, is subjected to many technical disadvantages and difficulties. Amongst others he is debarred from the ordinary right of a litigant to obtain access to documents in the possession of the other side. An unsparing use was made of these advantages by the Crown, and so much delay caused by the technical points which it raised, that though proceedings were taken in June 1873, it was not till February 1877 that Mr Thomas succeeded in getting his case laid before a jury. The trial took place before the late Chief Baron Kelly and a special jury, composed of merchants, shipowners, and other men of standing (whom the Chief Baron towards the close of the proceedings took occasion to compliment for their intelligence and attention to the case), and

lasted nearly three weeks. The result was a verdict for Mr Thomas against the Crown for £8790. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the Chief Baron was dissatisfied with it. In summing up he had complained more than once that he could never get a straightforward answer from the Crown witnesses to questions which bore on the most essential points of the case.

Substantially the verdict of the jury involved their belief that the principle of the construction of guns which had been for years advocated by Mr Thomas had been actually adopted from him in the construction of heavy guns by the Elswick firm and in the Royal Arsenal. Secondly, it involved the conclusion that Mr Thomas had been led to suppose, in such a way as virtually to constitute a contract, that if he succeeded in establishing the principle of his guns, the cost of his experiments would be repaid to him.

In June 1877 the Crown moved the Court of Queen's Bench for a new trial. The argument lasted several days. In its judgment the Court expressed no opinion, either favourable or adverse to the verdict on the first point, whether Mr Thomas's gun or ideas had been adopted; but on the second point, their decision was that the Chief Baron was wrong in leaving the question of contract to the jury at all—that the alleged contract, if any, being in writing, its interpretation was for the Court, not for the jury; and lastly, they decided that there was no contract upon which an action would lie.

From this decision it was open to Mr Thomas to appeal to the Court above. But he had had four years of litigation; and this, with the ten thousand pounds which the experiments had cost

him, had brought him to the end of his resources. He was a ruined man.

Assuming, then, that the Court was right, and that the jury also was right as to so much of their verdict as was not affected by the judgment of the Court, the case stands thus: That the principle of the guns manufactured by the Ordnance and by the Elswick firm, and now the property of the country, was substantially taken from Mr Thomas; but that the department had so guarded itself by its rules, and in its correspondence with Mr Thomas, that not only was no remuneration legally due to him, but that the cost of the experiments which had led to the adoption of the guns, of which the department and the Elswick firm reaped the advantage, amounting to £8790, was left to be borne by him.

Surely it was a hard case! And what followed made it harder still. When Lord Eustace Cecil, then Surveyor-General, was asked in the House of Commons, on July 28th 1879, how it happened that the jury in Mr Thomas's case had found a verdict in his favour, if it was the fact, as Lord Eustace had stated on a previous occasion, that the evidence on the trial proved that the method of construction adopted in the service-guns had been discovered in the Royal Arsenal,—when this question was put to him, the following incorrect and misleading answer was put into his mouth by his subordinates:—

“He had made inquiry at the War Office,” he said, *“but he was unable to obtain any explanation of the extraordinary verdict which the jury had come to in the case referred to. He had, however, been informed of a fact of which perhaps his honourable and gallant friend was ignorant, that the judges of the Queen's Bench had come to the unanimous conclusion that the verdict should be set aside, on the*

ground that the *weight of evidence was against it.*"

Now we ask if this answer does not conclusively establish the point we are endeavouring to make—viz., that an examination by its parliamentary chiefs into the condition of a department, against which there are the strongest *prima facie* grounds for suspicion, is the merest farce, because there can be but one possible result from it? Here we have the Surveyor-General of the Ordnance going to ask the very men, —Sir Frederick Campbell, Colonel Alderson, Mr Engleback, whose evidence the jury did not accept, —what the reason of the verdict of the jury was. He does not for one moment think of looking at the notes of the trial itself, or even of consulting privately the Attorney-General, who had been counsel at the trial. He had no notion of the kind of expressions used by a judge of Sir Fitzroy Kelly's eminence, either affecting the jury he is thus insulting, or affecting the Crown witnesses whom he consults as to what the decision of the jury ought to have been. He is, as any one who will read the judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench may see, to say the least, inaccurately informed by the department he trusts to, as to the nature of that judgment. On the question of the weight of evidence as to the priority of invention of Mr Thomas, the judgment does not touch at all. Yet the inference which any one would naturally draw from Lord Eustace Cecil's reply, or rather from the reply supplied to him, is, that the Court had decided that the weight of evidence was against Mr Thomas's claim to have been the actual inventor or part inventor, of the system adopted into the service, as to which the judges say not one word. Indeed, immediately after-

wards the Attorney-General stated what amounted to a direct contradiction of what Lord Eustace had said.

But we are bound to say that all such remarks as those which we are sure Mr Brand must inconsiderately have made, that Mr L. Thomas's charges show that "he is in a sad state of mind," are very wrong. The law courts are open. The Surveyor-General's office is a place of darkness, and that only. No one knows better than Mr Brand how impossible it is for him to penetrate that darkness.

For, thanks to the persistent patience and intelligence of a young member of Parliament—Mr French Brewster—Mr Brand had discovered that he was committed to making in the House of Commons a statement which would not bear investigation. We come now to the last case we have to cite.

Four years ago Mr Hope, now Colonel Hope, the inventor of the "Improved Shrapnel-shell," appeared again before the Ordnance Department which had treated him so ill before.

He offered to produce a gun that should cost two-fifths of the cost of our existing guns; that should be laid side by side with the Woolwich gun, which it should beat in every respect, until the Woolwich gun burst, and should then fire a hundred rounds more; and he undertook that his 7-ton gun should beat the service-gun of 38 tons. He undertook within those limits to fulfil *any* terms that might be imposed by the Ordnance Committee.

He asked for not one penny of money for experiments of any kind until he had proved all that he had said by producing his gun and submitting it to whatever public trials the Ordnance Committee might require. But he asked that, if and

when he had established the enormous superiority of his own gun, he should be allowed to supply guns at two-fifths of what we are now paying for them. He asked also, that before disclosing his system he should have a guarantee that, in the event of his proving all he claimed, he would be allowed to furnish a sufficient number of the guns of which, by Colonel Maitland's showing, we stand in urgent need. In other words, he asked that that should be done for him which the United States Commissioners declared to be the one right mode of securing efficient work—viz., that a remunerative contract, of enormous advantage to the country, should be made with him in the event of his achieving success.

Now we in our turn ask on what possible plea, consistently with a regard for the interests of the country, could such an offer as that have been refused?

For the country it is a pure case of winning either way. If Colonel Hope fails, not a penny is paid to him; if he succeeds, we get an incomparably cheaper and better article.

The excuse of the department for not adopting this offer is ludicrous in the extreme. They say their rules do not admit of making contracts, on condition of the production of a better and cheaper gun than they themselves can produce. They say they must have everything explained to them before they make any terms. How can a department with such a feeling about it as now exists everywhere, ever under these conditions obtain outside help at all?

The correspondence would be ludicrous if it were not so serious. To a man who has expressly said that he wants no assistance in conducting experiments, Sir F. Campbell writes, that before granting

him any money for experiments, such and such conditions must be fulfilled! Does that mean that the department does not read letters addressed to it? Or what does it mean?

Things were in this state when Mr Brewster inquired in the House whether the conditions of Colonel Hope's offer were not such that if he failed the nation incurred no loss; if he succeeded the national advantage would be great.

To this Mr Brand, coached by the department, replied that a trial had been offered to Colonel Hope. Looking into the matter, however, for himself, he discovered that he had been made to give an answer of which the substance was not true. And then, like the upright and straightforward English gentleman that he is, he at once corrected his mistake, took into consideration the whole question, and saw that there was no colourable ground for the position taken by the department. The result has, we believe, been some arrangement with Colonel Hope, in accordance with which the trial are to take place *four years later than they ought to have been made.*

The trials will be unquestionably of great interest. We must confess that, from the history we have been tracing, we think that it will be necessary to watch them with a very vigilant eye. Otherwise, seeing how pledged the department is in every way against the success of any men external to itself, some pretext will certainly be found for depriving the country of what may be of great benefit to it.

But, whatever may be the fate of the "Hope Gun," we are convinced that the time for a searching inquiry into the whole question of our mode of obtaining our armament has come.

We cannot trust to a body, with such a record as we have here

traced, the task of again spending millions, because they tell us that they have in their factories worked out a perfect gun. We want security that we are going to get the best gun that can be procured, wherever it comes from. We have no such security now.¹

The question is one of national, nay, of world-wide importance. As a German paper said the other day: "It would be death to all free ideas if England were to lose the feeling of her own security and the consciousness of her independence."

We believe fully with Sir F. Doyle that our "all-shattering guns" are vain if we do not keep other even more important things in a healthy condition; but if we fail now because we have no "all-shattering" guns at all, that will be the expression only of a far more deadly rotteness.

Under the cover of party government, there is the greatest danger lest a system should be set up in our midst which, hating daylight, and trusting to a parliamentary vote as every ready to back a head who can by no possibility really check what is going on under him, gives at least the most grievous opportunity for absolute corruption; while if actual corruption were present, it would be impossible that it should ever be reached or rooted out.

How serious, apart from all question of corruption, the state of this department has become, from the kind of cheese-paring extravagance of which it has been guilty, wasting millions and cutting down needful expenditure, may be judged from this, that it is an open secret that, at the time of the bombardment of Alexandria, *there was not powder available anywhere in Malta, Gibraltar, or England to have supplied the fleet sufficiently to repeat such an operation.*

We are told that if—as we hope he will do—Dr. Cameron moves that his Committee shall extend its researches to the Ordnance and Artillery Departments, he will be resisted, precisely because the exposure would be, and because, it is known that it would be, so tremendous. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that English politics have yet fallen so low.

If our leaders are ready on such a ground as that to resist inquiry, and if independent members will obediently follow them, our fate is sealed. It does not much matter whether the collapse comes in this way or some other; come it will. The security of England will have ceased, because, abandoning all the principles which have made England worthy to be secure, we shall have earned our fate.

¹ Since the above was written, we are glad to learn that some guns of a new pattern are at length being provided. Better late than never.

FORTUNE'S WHEEL.—PART II.

CHAPTER IV.—A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

It seems a pity that the novelist cannot introduce something like the chorus of the Greek play, or refer the reader to explanations in an appendix, for the succinct narration of those preliminary details which are indispensable to the understanding of his story. But sooner or later the reader must be troubled with them, and it is as well to trouble him soon and get it over. Born to a long pedigree and a broad inheritance of barren acres seriously embarrassed, David Moray, as a very young man, had been offered a chance of pushing his fortunes in the Tropics. It was a time when the oriental pagoda-trees bore richer fruit than now, or at least when there were far fewer Europeans to shake them. If there were grander prizes to be gained, there were greater dangers and hardships to be faced when the adventurer turned aside from the beaten tracks. Resolute, persevering, and prematurely self-reliant, young Moray was as much tempted by the hazards as by the prizes. His father, with the proverbial caution of the Scot, waited till his son had a certain experience. Then an additional mortgage on the Glenconan estates furnished him with a moderate capital. Perhaps the old gentleman might have been less freehanded had he known more of his son's disposition. David's daring speculations would have made his father shudder. The young adventurer had taken good introductions with him, and his pleasant ways made him powerful friends among members of the great English firms in the ports of China and the Malay Peninsula. He was always a welcome guest at their

tables; he might apparently have lived in luxurious free quarters for the duration of his natural life. Those of the merchants who were sportsmen had him in special affection; and nowhere are friendships more quickly cemented than in sporting-parties in the solitudes of the rice-swamps or the jungles. But Moray was the last man in the world to "sorn," as they say in Scotland—that is, to sponge upon friends. He was too full of energy, too set upon arriving at his ends, too home-sick, we may add—though the word scarcely expresses our meaning—to linger on the circuitous road that was to lead him back to Glenconan and a competency. Recreation in the way of wild sports came to him naturally; for the rest, he never relaxed when he could help it, save when there was nothing profitable to be done, or else to serve some definite purpose. Those pleasant evenings over the social board formed business as well as friendly connections. The chats at the bivouac by the forest-fire suggested many a topic of commercial interest. A partner of no firm in particular, Moray became the ally and agent of many besides the one that had trained him. The custom regulations of China were severe; the contraband trade was immensely lucrative; European opinion was sufficiently lax on the subject; and yet there were many gainful affairs that were too compromising to be lightly undertaken by the old established houses. Not a few of these transactions were put in Moray's way, when he had once given guarantees of his discretion and enterprise. No one cared

to inquire how far he was agent or principal. What was certain was, that Fortune stood his friend; and he became notorious as much for good-luck as for ability. Having repeatedly steered his frail skiff in safety through the breakers, he launched a vessel on his own account, and mustered a crew. In other words, he finally came out as a full fledged merchant, with agents at the Formosa Islands, and Singapore, and sundry of the Malay towns. For himself, he was here, there, and everywhere: the servants—whom he well knew how to choose, besides—could scarcely play him false, since his visits of supervision came off when they were least expected. So far he had the special gift of a M. de Lesseps, that he had the knack of establishing a friendly ascendancy over native potentates. He was understood to be hand in glove with not a few of the rajahs and sultans, and more than once his good offices and shrewd diplomacy had been of considerable service to the British authorities.

He was known to be rich; and it was said that he might have been richer, had it not been for his occasional flying trips to Scotland. And in the days when sailing-vessels and steamers made the circuit of the Cape, those visits were more serious affairs than they would be nowadays. But Moray, like Walter Scott, was wont to say that he must have died had he not occasionally breathed the air off the heather; while as it was, he had kept himself in admirable health, with an appetite that was as sound as his heart and his liver. During one of his furloughs, he had buried his father in Glenconan kirkyard, after having brightened the old man's declining years by relieving the estates of the last of their encumbrances. During another trip, and nearly twenty years before our

story opens, he had married a wife, the daughter of a Sussex squire, and persuaded her to share his wandering fortunes—a step to which her family were the more willing to assent, that the young lady had but little fortune of her own. The marriage was only too happy while it lasted. To his intense grief, poor Moray lost his wife by an epidemic, just as, being reclaimed and thoroughly domesticated, he had resolved to realise his property and come home. He never ceased to regret that he had not acted on the determination a year before. As it was, he threw himself into trade pursuits more energetically than ever, sending the little daughter his wife had left him to be nursed under the wing of a grand-aunt. He was relieved to be rid of the child, yet very loath to part with it—for already it had the smile and the eyes of its mother.

With the separation, his more tender feelings had it all their own way, and thenceforward he had another attraction to England. Latterly those flying home-trips of his, if they were more brief, became more frequent, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal. He had fixed the period of his final return at the age when his daughter ought to be "coming out"; and in the meantime he knew that she was in good hands. Old Miss Venables was a soft-hearted but sensible spinster, who had missed her vocation in not marrying. Her bright little grandniece was even more of a godsend than the very handsome annuity her brother-in-law settled on her. She devoted herself to her young charge. As Grace grew up, she engaged her an excellent governess: and the three females saw a good deal of the world in a quiet way, changing their residences from Bath to Brighton, from Clifton to Scarborough; and

varying the pleasant life with an occasional excursion to the Continent.

"Grace is petted, of course," the old lady used to say; "and perhaps I spoil her a little. I'm sure I don't know; and I don't think she generally abuses her influence. But it strikes me that, though she is kind enough to talk matters over fairly, she always contrives to have her way in the end."

Which proposition Grace, if she were present, would pleasantly dispose of with smiles and kisses. Possibly being too honest to deny it, she preferred to waive the point. As for her father, he was quite satisfied with the manner of her education.

"I don't fancy you will find it very easy to spoil her; and at all events, I give you liberty to try."

And as he stroked her fair hair, and looked in her frank eyes with proud confidence, the girl probably felt that she was put upon her honour. At all events, any spoiling was only skin-deep; and she grew up the most indulgent of domestic tyrants.

The sudden death of her aunt, which took place about eighteen months before her appearance at Glencoman, was a sad shock. It was somewhat softened by her finding a temporary refuge under the roof of another old friend; for her governess had just married a Protestant *pasteur* at Pau, where she offered all the advantages of a home to half-a-dozen young English ladies. There she was to await her father's return.

The death of Miss Venables, on whom he had devolved his paternal responsibilities, necessarily precipitated Moray's arrangements. He set to work to wind up with characteristic energy. As he explained to his daughter afterwards—"The thing had to be done, and there was little time to stand on the

manner of doing it. So I snapped a thread here, and cut a tangle there; and if there were knots, I untied them with my teeth or my fingers."

And when Grace remarked that she feared he must have sacrificed something considerable to his precipitation, he only answered, with a laugh, that if he came home with a trifle less money than he might have done, nevertheless she would be very satisfactorily tochered! "Which isn't at all, papa, what, I meant, as you know."

Not even the most intimate of his mercantile connections knew anything of the exact amount of his wealth, for Moray never made unnecessary confidences. But it was certain that his only daughter, by her fortune, as by her looks and her birth, ought to be free to pick and choose among all manner of eligible suitors.

Miss Moray was generally good-humour itself—she had the happy gift of looking on the bright side of things; and indeed, with the sad exception of her recent bereavement, life had hitherto almost invariably smiled on her. But for once Miss Moray was irritable and out of sorts; and the consciousness of that unchristian phenomenon fretted her, so that her last state was far worse than the first,—so much so, that her good friend Madame Robineau had proposed a consultation with the doctor. The bare suggestion of such an absurdity did Miss Moray good, and for the first time for several days she actually burst out laughing.

"I don't believe I've seen a doctor since I had the whooping-cough; and I am sure, in my present state of health, I am quite unfit for the interview. To face a doctor, one should be thoroughly robust. If you had spoken of a change of

Scene now, there might be something in that; and in any case, it would save your carpets. I feel as if there were quicksilver in my veins, and as if the chair-cushions were catapults. Perhaps you may have remarked my restlessness," she added, innocently.

"I have indeed, my dear; and so has Adolphe," answered Madame Robineau, so plaintively that Grace again rippled over in laughter. "And I do believe that a few days at the Eaux-Chaudes will do you all the good in the world. I don't mind giving myself a little holiday; and I daresay Adolphe can manage to join us on Monday, and offer us his escort back. But I must say, my dear, it is excessively foolish to make yourself so unnecessarily uneasy about your father. You know as well as I that he troubles the doctors as little as yourself; though, to tell the truth," she added, incautiously, "I think Mr Moray has been somewhat neglectful."

For her father's most unusual silence was the grief from which Grace was suffering. As a rule, and under all circumstances, he had invariably written once a-week, although sometimes his letters might be delayed, and two or three of them delivered together. But since the latest arrival, full five weeks had elapsed; and so Miss Moray was uneasy, irritable, and indignant. She had blamed his neglect, that she might calm her anxiety; but she never endured the slightest imputation on him from another, as Madame might well have known had she reflected.

"You may be quite sure, Madame Robineau, that Mr Moray has good reasons for what he does; and for all we know to the contrary, he may be any distance away in the jungles. You speak as if he were living in Pau or Paris, where there

are always letter-boxes round the corner, and telegraph stations over the way."

Madame was quick to read the unwonted storm-signals. It was rarely Grace spoke of her father as "Mr Moray"; and, moreover, they had been perpetually discussing during the last fortnight all conceivable contingencies that might have caused the delay. So she wisely waived the question and changed the subject, and the expedition to the Eaux-Chaudes was duly carried out. It did not prove much of a specific. Grace continued to be restless and preoccupied. It was the more disquieting in one whose natural temperament was placid; and Madame Robineau, becoming seriously uneasy, watched for letters almost as eagerly as her charge.

The reverend pastor had given himself leave from his flock on the Monday morning, arriving at the Eaux-Chaudes in time to accompany the ladies on a drive to Gabas. They had come back to a substantial tea; and it was one of the consequences of Grace's feminine upbringing that she had rather a liking for that most objectionable meal, and usually did it ample justice. But on this particular evening the mountain air had affected her as little as the mountain scenery. She showed herself as indifferent to the outlets and the trout as to the snow-covered summits, and the black pine-woods, and to the green waters rushing under the rocks and through the thickets of natural box-shrubberies. And yet, as if she had not had enough of communing with nature, when she rose from the table she left her friends to a conjugal *tête-à-tête*, and went off for a solitary ramble down the valley. Though she tripped lightly away, she did not walk very far. At the first sharp turn, she

stepped aside from the precipitous road, and seated herself upon a moss-cushioned stone hanging over the bed of the torrent.

I have given a very false idea of my heroine if I have represented her as in any way lackadaisical. Few young ladies were less given to melancholy moods; though, as with all finely strung and somewhat romantic natures, many of her most enjoyable moments were tinged with sadness. But now the dimpled chin went down into the slender hand, memory and imagination were away together upon a roving commission; and to any artist surveying the meditative maiden from above and behind, she might have sat for a Niobe or an image of *La Penserosa*.

I do not profess to follow her thoughts—and indeed they were so fantastically absurd as to be hardly worth the following. All that can be said in extenuation is, that she had been growing less and less like her sensible self for a fortnight past. She had lunched indifferently, she had starved herself at tea; and so, like some of the solitary hermits of the Thebaid after their severe and prolonged fasts, she saw strange visions and she dreamed wild dreams. Considering that Mr Moray was “hard as nails,” that the manifold experiences of many adventurous years had proved him to be something like a charmed life, the tremendous situations in which she figured him did infinite credit to the vivacity of her imagination. Could she have counted upon such fancies coming to her call, she might have composed a new series of the ‘Arabian Nights.’ But her father’s own stories and letters from the East had supplied the materials and the colouring. He was being caught in the coils of a gigantic anaconda, and being drawn out in ribbons like the metal

that is meant for an Armstrong gun. He was being held to ransom by a truculent Malay chief, who had confined him in a cage of split bamboo, with a view to ordering him off to execution after a course of preparatory torture. His vessel was becalmed, and he was beset by pirates, with the tints of a native crew turning unnaturally yellow behind the boarding-nettings, while the fleet of sweep-impelled proas was approaching hand over hand. Struck down by the jungle-fever or the cholera—she did not pretend to give the precise diagnosis of the disease—he was tossing in a grass hammock, clutching vainly at a water-jar, while his negligent attendant had gone sound asleep. That is scarcely a fair outline of the commonplaces which her fancy richly embroidered; but something like the last of these pictures had struck her so pathetically, that her agitation relieved itself in stifled sobs.

And then—the mania for devising surprises must have run in the family—and then she was startled from her melting dream by a hand being gently laid upon her shoulder. While her spirit had gone fluttering from the Pyrenees to the Tropics, it had missed the very individual it went in search of. A hale elderly gentleman, apparently in perfect health and excellent spirits, having rounded the sharp corner of the road, had paused to take breath and admire the landscape. What struck him most and at once, was the graceful figure in the foreground. The pose was sad, no doubt; but when he had wiped his forehead and rubbed his eyes, he showed anything rather than the appropriate sympathy. On the contrary, his pleasant though rugged features were lighted up by a sudden illumination, as if they had caught the last glowing reflec-

tion of the setting sun. Then the radiance gave place to a grin of self-satisfaction, as of a boy who saw his way to a capital joke. The dignified pedestrian cast a conscious look about him, as if to make quite certain that he was not observed. Next balancing himself on tiptoe like an elderly faun who had latterly fallen back upon looking on at the forest-dances, he stepped softly forward, as if treading among sword-blades, and his hand had come down on the dreamer's shoulder.

When a gentleman long past middle life indulges in something like a practical joke, he deserves to pay the penalty. Moray cursed his burst of boyishness from the bottom of his heart when he saw his daughter spring up with streaming eyes, start back, and turn paler if possible than before. In her state of exultation, and with the dash of superstition in her Highland blood, she may have fancied for the moment that she saw the *Doppelgänger* of the parent whose death or sufferings she had just been bemoaning. Grace had never fainted in her life; but now she might have yielded to the weakness and sunk down, had she not been caught in a pair of strong arms. The firm grasp did more to bring her to herself than the strongest smelling-salts or sal-volatile. Like a sensible girl as she was, she called her courage to her aid, and dismissed her terrors with her idle dreams. Five minutes more, and she was the Grace who had been more or less present to him, sleeping and waking, in restless nights on the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, as in Pullman cars between Brindisi and Paris.

"After all," he exclaimed, as they stopped for about the twentieth time in their slow saunter towards the hotel, after exchanging

the fullest explanations for mutual affectionate reproaches—"after all, my penitence is already almost a thing of the past, and I hardly regret the boyish trick I played you."

"Then I am sure you ought to repent it, sir," she answered, lightly; "and you must not begin by taking advantage of my forgiving disposition."

"No, I don't think I regret it," he went on reflectively, speaking rather to himself than to her, as he returned the warm pressure of her fingers. "You see I hoped, indeed I knew, that you cared about me; but we had been so far apart and for so long. It would have been only natural had you felt nothing much warmer than friendship for a prodigal father who must have seemed strangely neglectful. Now I know better, and for the future we understand each other."

"I should think so, indeed; as if any understanding had been necessary! A prodigal father! and neglectful! What of the many letters I missed so much, that, in missing them, for the first time you made me miserable? not to speak of the presents that fell in showers on me as on Madame Robineau and dear aunt Venables. Why, sir, do you know, we always regarded you as something between the Good Genius who keeps the keys of enchanted treasure-chambers, and the mighty men of the East who never travelled without spices and apes and peacocks."

Miss Moray's quotations had got rather mixed, between the Magi and King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. But then she was talking volubly for talking's sake, in case her feelings should again get the better of her; and they were standing full in sight of the hotel windows—for which reason she did not answer her father with an embrace, which was the kind of coin

in which he best liked to be paid for those gifts of his. But as he had said, they had already come to an understanding ; so it did not so much matter. He quite understood what was passing in her mind, and changed the subject accordingly.

"Talking of scents and spices and apes, there are no end of sandal-wood things coming round by Gibraltar for you, and I left a monkey in charge of my servant at the Louvre in Paris. I picked him up from a lascar on board the Jumna, when I struck a boat-hook into his hide, and saved him from a watery grave. There was something in his eyes that reminded me of you, and so I bought him for the family likeness. I don't know how the resemblance may strike you ; it is rather in the expression, perhaps, than in any regularity of features."

"*Merci pour le compliment, mon père,*" said the young lady, curtsying gracefully ; and when she ushered him into the sitting-room, all traces of emotion had disappeared, except perhaps for a slightly heightened complexion.

"Ah ! mademoiselle then has found the physician my wife prayed her to see," remarked M. Robineau gallantly, after compliments of ceremony had been exchanged with the distinguished arrival. "And found her appetite again," he might have added ; for at the inviting little supper which was quickly improvised, Grace kept her father very creditably in countenance. It was a pleasant meal, both to performers and lookers-on ; nor did the party separate very early. Madame and

her husband would have discreetly withdrawn, leaving the newly united relatives to their caresses and their confidences. But Moray would not hear of it. He thought his daughter had gone through enough in the way of emotion for the time, and fancied that the best preparation for sending her soundly to sleep would be to amuse and distract her in the meantime. M. Robineau, who was blessed with an inquiring mind, was ready enough to listen and ask leading questions. And Moray, when fairly warmed to the work, astonished the stay-at-home pastor with his stores of picturesque information. Grace had never seen her father figure to such advantage ; and as she had a considerable opinion of M. Robineau's intellect, she revelled in that gentleman's respectful admiration.

"It was as if he had conjured up the *spectacle* or the *farce*, which our principles can never permit us," he observed to his wife in the retirement of their sleeping-chamber. "It was as a *melange* of the travels of Marco Polo with the extravagances of M. Jules Verne. And what an air *grand seigneur* with it all, though his manners are as simple as his dress was slightly *soigne*. Ah, how *cette chère Mees* Grace ought to be happy !"

To which Madame, who had been scarcely less enthusiastic, sleepily but cordially assented. For Moray's frank face, and the dignified ease of his manner, as well as the modesty with which he touched on any personal adventures, were admirably fitted to ingratiate him with the ladies.

CHAPTER V.—COUSINLY AFFECTIONS.

When M. Robineau had bid *seigneur*, he expressed even more adieu to the nabob and *grand* unqualified admiration than on

their first acquaintance. And with good reason, for, as he gratefully remarked, "On ne pourrait pas être plus généreux." The mighty man of the East had been lavish of his gifts to the "temple" in which the worthy pastor ministered, and he had made Madame Robineau magnificent offers to induce her to devote herself for a month to his daughter. The weather was becoming to hot to make Pau a desirable place of residence; and it was arranged that Grace was to pass a month under Madame's wing between the baths in the mountains and Biarritz.

"Why don't you take me with you?" she demanded, not unnaturally. "I thought it was agreed that we were to be inseparable for the future."

"So I hope we shall be, my dear—till—"

"Till when?"

"Well, till it pleases you to change your name, Miss Moray, which seems a contingency we are both bound to contemplate."

Miss Moray laughed, and vowed eternal constancy or celibacy with a semi-comic seriousness that by no means carried conviction. With all her filial love, it was quite in her mind to give her father a rival sooner or later. Then she returned to the point in dispute, and pressed her company with a pleading eloquence that, as she said, should have touched a heart of stone. But her father was obdurate, for reasons best known to himself, and defended his resolution with flattering sophistries.

"Were it not that we were to be so soon reunited, my dear, nothing would induce me to leave you. But you will know some time, that few things are so enjoyable in life as dallying in anticipation with pleasures that seem certainties. Not that I have not carried that too far

occasionally. I have sat looking at a basket of mongosteens in sultry weather, till the moment had gone by when they could be eaten in perfection. I have watched the tigress playing with her cubs in the jungle, till something suddenly scared her, and I missed the shot."

"Your instances tell against your argument, and your honesty is too much for you," his daughter rejoined, very pertinently. But there was no shaking his fixed determination, so she could only sigh and resign herself.

After all, what had much influenced his decision was his impatience to have done with the past and begin afresh with the future. Grace in England would have fettered his movements; he would always have been dissipating with her or dangling after her. As it was, he went to work indefatigably to finish the winding up of his Eastern affairs and put everything in train. He sought satisfactory investments for his capital; he made a variety of indispensable purchases, buying horses and hill-carriages, and new batteries of guns; he sent upholsterers to set Glenconan in order, and engaged a suitable staff of servants. When the princess came down to her hereditary domains, she should find everything in tolerable order. He had thought of buying a house in town, and of having Glenconan entirely furnished and decorated. But the latter feat was almost impossible in the time, even had he given *carte blanche à la Monte-Christo*; and he knew, besides, that if he wished to pay Grace a compliment and give her pleasure, he must leave everything to her taste, and throw the troubles of shopping on her shoulders. "What is fun to her would be misery to me," remarked this excellent parent,

and the reflection brought him infinite relief.

Had Mrs Moray been still in the body, the small family party that was to greet Grace at Glenconan might have been differently arranged. Here was a great heiress, inexperienced and unsophisticated, about to be launched upon English society. "She might marry a duke," her proud father often said to himself; and indeed there seemed no just cause or impediment why she should not. Besides the money which might come in conveniently were she to marry a peer with a nominally ample rent-roll, she was well-born, well-bred, singularly winning and accomplished to boot. For her accomplishments came to her by intuition instead of education. Like her cousin Jack, she drew and coloured with a facility that marvellously resembled genius. She would sit down to the piano and rattle you off a fantasia of her own very original conception. Brilliancy was brought in in aid of feeling; and in her intense though unconscious strength of sympathetic abstraction, she threw her whole soul into the melodious intonations. Though she had seldom crossed the Border, she would warble some plaintive Scotch air so as to bring tears to the eyes of impressionable listeners; and perhaps nothing leads on to serious love-making like mutual *abandon* in such emotional moments.

Moray knew all that as well as anybody: he was very much a man of the world, although his days had been passed in the far East; and it certainly was not his way to underestimate the fascinations of his daughter. Yet he had deliberately chosen to throw her into the company of a couple of cousins who could scarcely be called eligible, although well aware that at any moment an accident might happen,

the consequences of which it would be impossible to remedy.

For the two young gentlemen to whom the reader has already been introduced were his nephews—the one by marriage, the other by blood. Leslie, whom he liked rather than loved, was his sister's son, and proprietor of a small estate in East Lothian. Roodholm, when the moderate jointure of the dowager Mrs Leslie was deducted, might be worth some £1200 per annum—certainly not more. But Leslie, with his many estimable qualities, was a man in whom Moray scarcely believed. As he had been heard to remark once, when touched in the liver, "That boy is doomed to die in the fullness of years and reverence, after wasting his days and frittering away his opportunities. And the best reward for his life of thoughtful benevolence would be living to attend his own funeral, and listening to the eulogies pronounced over his coffin. Yes, Master Ralph is a thoroughly good fellow, and a trustworthy; but——"

In that somewhat depreciatory estimate, perhaps Moray was mistaken, for the natures of the uncle and nephew had little in common. Moray scarcely believed in the existence of those qualities he admired, unless their possessor was perpetually showing certificates to character in the shape of palpable evidences of visible success.

As for Jack Venables, in all essential circumstances he was infinitely less eligible than Leslie. The nephew of Moray's wife, he was the eldest son of a highly respectable Sussex rector, who was, besides, a canon of Chichester Cathedral. But the Church dignitary lived nearly up to his means, and there would be little to distribute among his numerous children. Jack might be said to have no expectations; nor had he any of those specially

influential connections that almost hustle a clever young fellow uphill. If the world was his oyster, as he believed, it was for him to find the knife to open it; and he had been sorely exercised over the choice of a profession. He was in haste to arrive, and yet he longed to linger—or at least to improve each shining hour, in the way of pleasure as well as business. A life of aimless pleasure would have been intolerable to him; a life of richly repaid monotony, or of dull isolation in some back-of-the-world colony, would have been even worse. He would have scouted a consulship and an income of £3000, had such gifts of Providence been on the cards, since they would have involved exile and possessing his soul in patience through a long course of saving. Such a career as Moray's had been, seemed altogether different. There was perpetual excitement in it to make privations almost pleasurable, with the chances of the *coups* that carried you forward to wealth. He honestly admired his uncle and his success; and had it occurred to the elder man to place Venables in his shoes when he retired, the youth would have asked nothing better of fortune. That, however, had not occurred to Mr Moray; and Jack, with his vague fancies and indefinite future, seemed a singularly impracticable subject. He might turn out well or ill: he was the very man, according to the Scotch saying, "to make a spoon or to spoil a horn." For that very reason, perhaps, Moray liked him; and, what meant more, in a man of his shrewdness, he believed in him. He thought Jack would be well worth a helping hand, and that hand he was quite ready to extend. So it could not have been without due consideration that he threw the impecunious but agreeable youth

into familiar relations with a pretty daughter. And the prospects caused him anxiety; and he seldom was without the fortune she was to inherit without his usually equable nature being ruffled.

But whatever the future might have in store for the party at Glenconan, it was certain that they were thoroughly enjoying the present. Grace had brought delightful weather with her: balmy evenings and glorious sunsets succeeded the bright and genial days. The monkey that had been sent down from town with the heavy baggage, having shaken off the agues and shivering-fits that had oppressed him during the rains, roamed verandah and roofs like a chartered libertine, doing infinite damage to the crockery and the flower-beds when people's backs were turned. Grace had taken him in warm affection; and consequently both her cousins courted him assiduously, to the great development of the virtue of self-control. There was little affectation in that with Leslie, who was placid and long-suffering, and whom all animals at once recognized as a friend. But it was as good as a bit of comedy to see Jack Venables instinctively raise his hand for a cuff, or his foot for a kick, smooth his ruffled eyebrows on second thoughts, and fondly stroke the objectionable animal, who probably repaid the caress with a snarl or a snap.

And to Moray, who said nothing, though little escaped him "the monkey in the family" meant a great deal. He saw that both the cousins were, metaphorically, falling at the feet of the heiress, though neither might have acknowledged to himself how much he had come to care for her. Yet he looked on quietly, and let matters take their course, as if the

girl had been one of a dozen daughters.

There was another individual who looked on quietly too, seeing more than the young lady, or his master, or anybody else suspected. Donald Ross had vowed eternal devotion, and had already made decided inroads on her heart. She was frequently with him in the outhouse, where he employed his leisure in busking flies for the streams and lochs, or knocking up grouse-boxes for the forthcoming shooting-season. It was Donald who led her pony on expeditions into the hills, and found endless subjects of conversation with which to entertain her. He dwelt particularly on the reminiscences of those tenants of the Glen who had been shipped to the antipodes in the days of her grandfather. He revelled in the legend of the witch of Funachan, who had been notoriously in the habit of night riding the evil-minded hill-folks in their nightmares. But she listened to him most heedfully when he would change the subject to the pair of cousins who were her constant companions. Both the old keeper and his young mistress were inclined to hero-worship; but it was hard to say which of the young men had the best of it with them. On the whole, perhaps, the stars fought in their courses for Venables. Donald would go back again and again to the adventure on the hills above Loch Rosque, giving, as was only fair, the precedence in the story to Leslie.

"It's surely a sad peety, Miss Grace, that both of them were born in the South; but there's not very many of us Highland people would have done what Mr Leslie did. I would have thought myself twice—ay, or perhaps more times—before I would have gone down over that rock, even for Glenconan himself.

I would have gone, I hope; though to me it would have been certain destruction, for I'm neither so young nor yet so light as I used to be—and Mr Leslie is not that light, either. But Peter, he will be telling me that Mr Leslie just stepped over as if he had been setting his foot in the ferry-boat below there. Many a man might do that, and yet lose his head; but Mr Leslie was as cool—ay, as cool as a shepherd in the drifts, or an otter in December. Maybe Peter is a bit of a fool; but his eyes are as good as another's."

So far, so well. Donald would honestly pay the tribute of admiration demanded by Leslie's coolness and courage. But when his conversation turned from the saviour to the saved, it was then that he gave way to heartfelt eloquence.

"But after all, Miss Grace, it was worth while chancing something for Mr. Venables. He's a fine young lad that; ay, he's a very fine young lad. If he did lose his head a bit on the cliff, as Peter says, it was no wonder. If it was not that he likit the sport so well, he would never have chanced his neck for that ill-smelling beast of a goat. I would not have goue up among the rocks there myself for anything less than a hart; but the Southern gentlemen have strange fancies. Mr Leslie is a fine gentleman too, as Glenconan's nephew and your cousin ought to be, Miss Grace. Bnt he'll sit down in the heather when we would be after a stalk; and I've known him drop off and go asleep, and never waken again, till the deer was stalked and shot and to be gralloched. But as for Mr Venables, when once he has set eyes on his stag, he'll bristle up and settle down to the stalk like a sleuth-hound. Its little he'll think

then of the rocks or of the burns. I've seen him when the blood was running down of his hands, when the water would be draining out of the pockets of his 'knickerbogles'; and though he may have the sense to hearken to a whisper from me, I would be sorry to make a sound or do anything unchancy. He's as good-humored a gentleman as Glenconan himself; but then he looks as ready to get up his back as Glenconan or a wild cat; and 'deed, were he once to set his teeth, I wanda trust him."

Which might not be an amia-

ble trait in Mr. Venables's character, but which nevertheless recommended him to his cousin rather than otherwise. Like most women with anything in them, perhaps she inclined by preference to a man with a spice of the devil; and in that respect Venables resembled her father, who was her ideal of chivalrous manhood. All the more so that, as she often told herself, there was something so winningly kind in those sparkling eyes of his, when involuntarily they seemed to soften as they met the glance of her own.

CHAPTER VI.—AN EMBARRASSING INTERVIEW.

Had the young men been cross-examined, they must have frankly confessed that seldom before had they been so happy as at Glenconan. The days seemed to go gliding by like the swift and silent night-flight of the owl—though that is hardly an appropriate metaphor, since the merriment was sometimes noisy enough, and they chanced to be exceptionally fortunate in sunshine. We should rather say that the joyous Sun-god had greased the wheels of his chariot, and was getting over the ground at his best pace. But their temperaments were very opposite, and thence came a strange inconsistency. Leslie, though earnest and thoughtful, was somewhat indolent, and inclined to take life lazily. So long as he was happy in the day, he left the morrow to look after itself. Doubtless he might have great latent reserves of power, but it needed some strong stimulus to make him draw upon them; while Venables, who belonged apparently to the butterfly order of beings, was nevertheless profoundly interested in his own future. He

was bound to make his own way in the world; he was due to "arrive" sooner or later: the most agreeable terms in pilgrimage were simply waste of time. He could never do upon a couch of roses—out the prick of a thorn! him inclined to spring up! Conscience played the part of metropolitan policemen, and perpetually bidding him get up and move on.

How far he really cared for his cousin—how far, at least, he had fallen in love with her—was a point that he had not carefully considered. Had he been born to a handsome independence, he would have probably paid his court to her and proposed. But he shrank from the nuisance of thoughts that worried; and it was a standing trouble to him that he must spend labour and time to attain the easy position where he might indulge his love and his ambition. Even if he hurried uphill by the shortest conceivable cuts, how many inestimable opportunities might be missed in the meantime! That, however, was the more reason for hastening

his start, and making up his mind as to the choice of a profession. His father did not count for much in the way of an adviser; and self-reliant as he was, he felt he should be all the better for the sage counsels of experience. He had an infinite respect for the successful lord of Glenconan, and he knew that he was a favourite with his genial uncle. If he had vague fancies of some day making love to Miss Grace, it might be well that her father should be taken into his preliminary counsels, sharing the credit of his success or lightening the responsibility of failure. For Mr Venables, though thoroughly honest at heart, plumed himself on the shrewdness of his social diplomacy, and believed that you could hardly pay a more delicate compliment than in discreetly appealing for advice to a veteran's experience.

To do him justice, he had never for a moment dreamed of Moray offering him pecuniary help; and even with his ill-defined feelings as to that gentleman's heiress, his pride would have shrunk sensitively from accepting it. But Moray, as we know, viewed the matter differently, and was pleased, and at the same time somewhat curious, when Jack with unwonted solemnity requested half an hour's quiet conversation. He was anxious too, for his daughter was always in his thoughts.

"Does the young dog mean to make a proposal in form?" he asked himself. "Nothing is more natural than that he should have fallen in love; so with his coolness, I can almost fancy him capable of that. And yet I do him wrong: he is too much of a gentleman."

Jack's opening speech relieved his uncle's anxiety. The youth began abruptly, almost bluntly.

"You see, sir, it is high time I was doing something for myself;

and I know nobody more capable of advising me."

"And I know nobody more willing to advise you; so go ahead, my good boy, and let me hear you state the case."

Which Jack did lucidly and succinctly. He had no money, or next to none; he saw no opening in any special direction; he might possibly get a place in some Government office; but he strongly objected to monotonous routine, and would never live contented on a moderate income—unless indeed he had failed again and again, and felt that the luck had gone fairly against him.

As he spoke, the feelings of Moray's own youth came back to his memory, and he heartily sympathised with the young fellow, who had a spirit so much like his own. Master Jack's seasonable frankness had done him more good than he fancied. But Moray was a prudent Scotchman, and did not care to commit himself hastily.

"What does your father say to it all? Of course you have spoken to him."

"My father is the best man in the world; and if he happened to be an archbishop with plenty of patronage, my father, if I assented to his wishes, would make things smooth enough. As it is, he would like me to go into the Church, and trust to treading quietly in his footsteps. But he has no livings to give away, and he never asked a favour in his life; and besides, too, I can't think it honest to mount the surplice when you don't feel the slightest vocation for the altar."

"Quite right, my boy!" Moray ejaculated.

"Then, again, seeing that the Church is too respectable for me, I might be an artist. No objection to that, I should say, on the

score of hypocrisy, for the most brilliant of artists may be as Bohemian as he likes. But though I have a decided fancy that way, I misdoubt my talent; and unless a gentleman be a genius, he should not take to painting."

"No doubt of it," returned Moray who, though in theory he admired artists, and would have consecrated chapels to a Titan or a Velasquez, by no means fancied the idea of a kinsman of his own failing, as he believed that Mr Venables was bound to fail.

"Well then, sir," said Jack, rather ruefully, "I come back to my starting point,—that I have the world before me, and the question is as to the direction to steer. To think that at this very instant I may be hesitating at the *embranchement* of a dozen of paths—that it is eleven to one that I strike a wrong one, and miss the way that leads straight up to fortune! Oh for a glimmering of your Celtic second-sight! Possibly Mr Ross would be the person to advise with."

Moray laughed. "If you really are standing where a dozen paths branch off, you cannot be blamed for not seeing the invisible. But so far as I can gather, you are in the middle of a mist, and are inclined to trust to your luck to grope your way out of it. And there, perhaps, I, who am a Highlander, can help you, as Donald has helped you in similar difficulties ere now."

Then Mr Moray spoke out in a manner that took his nephew altogether aback. When Moray placed himself or his means at another's disposal, he was not a man to do things by halves.

"I like you, Jack, as you may have partly remarked; and I'm an old fellow without any son of my own. Oh yes, I know I have a daughter, and I am never likely to

forget it; but so far as appearances go, Grace will be richer than may be altogether good for her. In any case, I have enough and to spare. I don't mean to adopt you. I don't propose to treat you as my son and heir. I would not do any such injury to a spirited young man as to deprive him of all incentives to action. But setting you straight in a direction, and giving you a hand along, is a different affair altogether. I loved my wife well—I lost her only too soon; and I should be very happy to do something for her kinsman. The question is, What? I am sorry now that I should have disposed of my interests in the East; but I was in haste to come back and give Grace a home here. I have good friends there still, however. But, like me, you would have to begin the climb at the beginning; and money is more slowly made than it used to be."

He paused a moment, expecting very possibly that Jack would nevertheless jump at the suggestion, remembering his after-dinner speech some days before, when apostrophising the show of plate on the buffet. And had he made such an offer then, Jack would most certainly have eagerly accepted. Now the young man would have been more surprised at his own hesitation, had not his mind been illuminated by a sudden self-revelation. Brought to the point and spurred to the leap, he could not decide at once to leave his cousin behind him. Indefinite exile meant absolute separation. He hummed and hawed, and was sensible of a confusion which brought unwonted blushes to his comely countenance.

Nor was his embarrassment diminished by Moray's demeanour. That gentleman had liked his

nephew for his adventurous dash, and was loath to think he had been mistaken in him. But putting himself in Jack's place, and carrying himself back to Jack's age, he knew how the launch into Eastern life would have tempted him, with the hazards that would make patience seem more than tolerable; and pluck without perseverance seemed to him a poor quality. Jack felt that he was being misunderstood by the man with whom, above all others, he desired to stand well. His face grew redder; he lost all his usual composure, and he felt the fool he knew he looked. Moray saw that some concealment, "like a worm in the bud," was flushing his young favourite's damask cheek, and good-naturedly made an effort to come to the rescue.

"You spoke of missing chances, my boy; and you may miss a good one now, if you do not give me your absolute confidence. Whatever you may have in your mind, speak it out. I pledged myself that I shall not think any the worse of you."

A reckless "*tu là roulu, George Dandin*," feeling took possession of Venables, and carried him away. His uncle ordered him to be frank: and frank he would be, with a vengeance, come of it what might.

It was like taking a header from the rocks into the rapids; and how he might come out again, who should say? He had no time to reflect, and could only act upon impulse. "In five minutes I may get my dismissal, and be told to pack my traps. Never mind: here goes—nothing venture, nothing win." And although he stammered when he began, he was astonished to find that his very vague ideas found persuasive expression.

To his inexpressible delight and relief, Moray seemed less taken

aback than might have been expected. At all events, he listened silently and calmly, while Jack, premising that he intended an immediate departure from Glenconan, went on to speak of an attachment to his cousin.

"I scarcely knew my own mind, sir, till you brought me to book; but what would yesterday have been the fulfilment of my fondest dreams, means nothing to-day but a sentence of transportation: and if I dare to say as much, it is only because I may at once be put out of my misery. I think I can never be happy without Grace; I know that I am never likely to be made happy with her: so give me a word of forgiveness, and let me go in peace."

Moray stroked his moustache and bent his head in silence. Jack, who had suppressed himself after his effort of audacity, began to gain heart again and rise slowly, like a namesake-of-his-in-the-box whose springs have been temporarily flattened. Visions of an Eden with an Eve in it were opening before him. Was it possible that his uncle meant to fold him in his arms, ring for Grace, and send down the curtain with a melodramatic "Bless you, my children, and be happy"? The idea was dismissed as soon as entertained, though there was ample room left for encouragement.

"Most men in my place might have been angry, Master Jack; and I don't know what her mother might have said to you. But I admire your candour; and, after all, there is nothing criminal nor very surprising in your feelings. Quite the contrary. Perhaps it was my fault that you and Grace have been thrown so constantly together. For reasons of my own, I have never set my heart on my girl making what they call a great

marriage. She is sure to be well off, though she may be less rich than you suppose. No, you needn't protest; I don't suspect you of loving my daughter for her 'toother.' And in any case—be it said without offence—she will be far more than a match for a penniless young adventurer. But if she did chance to take a fancy to you—or to Leslie"—there Jack winced—"and if you could contribute a fair share towards the housekeeping, so that you might marry without loss of self-respect, why, I should not stand in the way of your wishes. Not that that advances you very far, you will say," seeing that Jack remained silent and nonpulsed, "since you have no means at all, and we are merely considering ways. You don't expect my daughter to wait for you, I presume; but if she should happen to be disengaged when you are in a position to apply, I may make no serious objections. Mark me, young man, though I talk lightly, I mean seriously. I am sure I may trust to your honour not to compromise Grace in any way."

"I have not the slightest reason to believe that my cousin cares for me. And besides," he added, after a moment's pause, "with your permission I shall leave Glenconan to-morrow."

"Softly, softly! You are always ice or fire. Were you to beat a retreat without sound of drum, it might make talk—or mischief—that had better be avoided. Give me your word, and stay with us for another week; longer delay might be dangerous—for you. I take that as settled; and I may have something to say both to you and Leslie, ere you leave—for be it

understood that I am not bound to you in any way, so far as those aspirations of yours are concerned. And now to come back to your immediate concerns,—for as to these, you have more reason than before to command me."

"Believe me, I heartily appreciate your generosity, but help from you has become out of the question."

"How now, young man?" said Moray, sternly—and Venables saw how his uncle could look when he was angry,—"how now? Do you dare to tell me you are offended by language that most people would call foolish and weak?"

"God forbid, sir! How can you misunderstand me? I should have thought your own high spirit would have been more in sympathy with mine. From my uncle and very kind friend I might gratefully have accepted anything. By my frank avowal I have abandoned all hope of your help, for I can take nothing from the father of the heiress on whom I have rashly set some hopes. I said I stood at the cross-roads; and it appears I have struck into a wrong one—that is all."

"Nonsense, man!" exclaimed Moray, with extreme cordiality. "Confound the fellow!" he muttered to himself; "if he were to make love to Grace as he does to me, he would win her heart in a hand-gallow. Nonsense man! let the night and the next day or two bring counsel. You shall stay here on your parole for another week; and before you leave for the South, we may see our way somewhat more clearly as to your future arrangements,"—a prediction which proved to be true, though not precisely as Mr Moray had expected.

CHAPTER VII.—STIRRING UP OF STRIFE.

It must be owned, that after an interview of the kind, the position of any young man in Venables's place would have been somewhat distressing. He prided himself on his *savoir vivre*: he could carry off a sense of awkwardness as well as most people; and his cousin's innocent unconsciousness helped him. Yet his manner towards her had changed, and he knew it; and he was in perpetual terror that she might ask for an explanation. Alone with her, he was comparatively at his ease; but he was embarrassed—very unnecessarily—when her father's eye was upon them. Where Moray trusted, he trusted implicitly: if he had not trusted his nephew, he would never have spoken as he had spoken; and although, doubtless, he may have meditated over the matter a good deal, it was not with reference to anything passing before him. And Jack might perhaps have felt more at his ease in one respect, had he known that Leslie occupied his uncle's thoughts nearly as much as himself. But it was in his sanguine nature to jump to conclusions; and when certain trifling preliminary obstacles should have been smoothed away, including the choice of a profession and lucrative success in it, he pictured a happy couple launched on a pleasant wedding-trip, with wind and tide and everything in their favour.

Yet, characteristically enough, it was not only the thought, "Were Grace to catechise me, what in the world should I answer?" that gave him a vast deal of needless anxiety. Musing over a possible engagement, and the minor questions that would arise out of it, the speculations of the ridiculous young man ran somewhat in this wise—

"I suppose if I were to marry the heiress of Glenconan, my uncle would insist on my taking the family name. Well, there need be no objection to that. Venables-Moray would sound well enough, and I might even make such a sacrifice to love as to sink my patronymic, and style myself Moray alone. But then he might wish us to spend the best part of the year in Glenconan; and Grace is already falling passionately in love with the place. I like it myself, but I don't like the climate. Scotland, except in the picturesqueness of the Highlands, is only a colder and a bleaker England; and England for that matter, is bleak enough. After all, however, climate and scenery are secondary points; and Grace, if she were persuaded to love me, is just the sort of girl to be amenable. It would be a case of 'my people shall be thy people,' &c.,—not that I would ask her to make unreasonable sacrifices. And then my profession, whatever it may be, would be reason sufficient for our living elsewhere. Glenconan would never give me Grace if he thought I meant to live on her money."

Then walking out of his Alnashar-like dreams, he might glance across at Leslie half guilty, and think how that sensible individual would laugh at him did he guess at all that was passing in his mind. And perhaps, on the whole, it had hitherto been as well for Leslie that he was profoundly ignorant of what was going on.

Then, being diverted from one train of thought, Jack's lively brain would take another turn, and towards a point that perhaps ought to have been settled in the first place. He would ask himself how far he was really in love, and

whether the passion was likely to last. He knew he was extremely fond of Grace, and each day he grew fonder and more fond. But then she was a girl who deserved a husband who would worship her, and past experience had led him to doubt his own capacity for permanent adoration. He was shrewd enough to see, that with all her spirits and brightness, if she gave herself to a man, she would give herself unreservedly, and take love so thoroughly in earnest that disappointment might wreck her life.

But, "Bah! that morbid conscientiousness of mine is the best guarantee I can offer of my constancy. I know I am tremendously fond of her now; she is just the sort of a girl to gain on one, day by day; and looking at our joint future in that light, our happiness will be an incalculable quantity. In any case, there is nothing pressing, since honour ties my tongue in the meantime."

As for his uncle's offers, on more mature consideration he had pretty nearly made up his mind to accept them. "Pride is all very well up to a certain point; but pride pushed to extremes would in this case be an insult, or at all events my uncle would be apt to take it as one. I shall never forget how he flared up the other day, with a blaze in his eye like a stag breaking bay, or one of his ancestors ordering a malefactor to pit and gallows. So I suppose I may as well make up my mind to be helped; though all the same, I wish I could have managed otherwise."

Possibly that sweet spirit of resignation, that generous resolution to suffer himself to be enriched, may have brought their reward. The day before that of his intended departure, Mr Venables received a business letter. No presentiment warned him of the nature of the

contents; on the contrary, he by no means liked the looks of it. Though not very seriously indebted, he had run sundry "tricks" at the university and in town; and when he saw the sinister blue envelope and the stiff handwriting,—"A dun for a thousand!" was his natural ejaculation. On tearing it open, evil omens seemed to thicken. The communication was dated from Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, and signed by an unknown firm of lawyers. With a very wry face he began to run his eye over it, and this is what Mr Venables read:—

"DEAR SIR,—We have the honour of informing you that under the testamentary dispositions of the late Mr Isaac Philpotts, of 790 Wimpole Street, and of Brick Court, Temple, you became entitled to the amount of £10,000, free of legacy duty. As the personality of our deceased client is chiefly invested in consols, there need be no delay in realising it.

"We shall either transfer the sum as invested at the current prices of the day, or expect your instructions as to manner of payment.

"Annexed receive an extract from the will of our late client.—And we have the honour to remain your obedient servants,

"COX, GRINDLEY, & GROPER."

*Extract from Will of the late
Isaac Philpotts Esq., Q. C.*

"Also I leave and bequeath to John Venables, eldest son of the Rev. Cyril Venables, of Oakholm Rectory, Sussex, the sum of ten thousand pounds, free of legacy duty. And I desire it to be understood that I bequeath the said sum in memory of early and affectionate intimacy with an old school and college companion, believing that I shall best gratify my

friend by assuring a moderate provision.

Jack read, and rubbed his eyes. His first idea was, that he was the victim of a heartless and aggravating hoax. On second thoughts, that seemed even more improbable than the marvellous piece of good-luck that had befallen him at a most critical moment. Though he had never seen Mr. Phillpotts in the flesh, he had often heard his father speak of him as an able and eccentric old man, who had made a figure and a fortune as a parliamentary counsel, and who, in the bustle of his busy professional life, had altogether ignored early associations.

"Anyhow," as Jack remarked, gratefully and philosophically, "his eccentricity, were it madness, had a pleasant method about it; and if any disappointed relative should dispute the will, this judicious legacy should be proof of sanity."

He was a free-handed young fellow as ever lived; and of all the vices that grew upon us with age, least of all was he contaminated by that of avarice. Yet it was a strange proof of the dangerous power of gold, that, on calmly realising the news, he found they almost intoxicated him. He had read his letter on the gravel-sweep in front of the house, and he started off for a walk, or rather a run, through the shrubberies. His lungs expanded with a sense of his good fortune—with a feeling that the legacy was the sign of a prosperous future. He left the shrubberies and climbed the hill, jumping from rock to rock and on to slippery stones, while his feet seemed to be winged like those of the feather-footed Mercury, who, by the way, was the Mammon of pagan mythology. He confounded the piece of good fortune with his

personal deserts, and respected Providence for having so seasonably smiled on him. In the new-born feeling of independence, he might cordially accept the offer he had hitherto hesitated over. He would decline his uncle's money, but gratefully accept his uncle's help. He might trade upon his energy and talents, in the assurance of speedy returns; and, with a modest competency but magnificent reversions, might mate with any gentlewoman of average position, even were she his pretty and well-dowered cousin of Glenconan. And the thought brought him back to the prosaic fact, that it would be but kind and civil promptly to communicate the contents of the dispatch to the relatives who were to be still nearer and dearer.

He was a good fellow, though rather feather-brained as yet; and want of liberality, as we have said, was not his failing, though he seemed as keenly set upon the quest of gold as any of the Argonauts. As it happened, he had the purse in his pocket that was fairly well-filled for his journey. Peter, the stupid gillie, had the good-luck to cross his path as he came bounding homewards from the hill like a roebuck.

"Ah, Peter, my man, you know I am going South in a day or two; here's a trifle in remembrance of that bit of work of ours on Loch Rosque."

Indeed his prodigality needed some excuse, and tears came to Peter's eyes and his voice trembled as he thanked the generous young Saxon gentleman for a sum which meant the ease and happiness of next winter to the wife and bairns on Loch Hourn. As for Jack himself, he was richly rewarded: it was a new sensation to know that money-giving could bring so much pleasure. He vowed that he would

lay the lesson to heart, and soon he found another occasion of practising it. It was only turning aside for a dozen of paces or so, and he came upon Donald Ross hammering away industriously at grouse-boxes. Forth came the *portemonnaie* again, and the head-keeper was gratified with a proportionally liberal donation. Now Donald was a Scot who appreciated hard cash; for though he might probably die a pensioner of Glenconan, he meant to leave as little as possible to chance, and hoped to guarantee himself against old age and the rheumatism.

At the same time, he had a heart and a conscience; and the young kinsmen of his master were charges of his own. He shook his head as he weighed the glittering coins in his palm, and then he tendered three or four of them back again.

"No, no, Mr Venables. I know, as the minister well remarked the other Sabbath, when he was giving us a discourse for the maintaining of foreign missions, that the liberal soul will be made fat—not that putting on fat is any good thing to a gentleman who cares greatly about the shooting and the stalking. But if you would forgive my saying it, when ye offered me all that gold, it brought to my mind another saying, though I am not just sure that ye will find it in the Scriptures."

"I believe I can guess, Donald," rejoined Jack, quick as a gun-flash, with a laugh and a blush. "Fools and their money—hey?—was that about it, Mr Donald?"

"It's not for the like of me to contradict your honour," said Donald, demurely. "Though, mind you, Mr Venables, I would sooner have bitten out my tongue than spoken it. But you're but a young man, sir, and I'm an old one that likes you; and—Glenconan

himself, for all his open hand, would never have given half as much."

Jack, though slightly offended, stood embarrassed and self-condemned. "The old keeper is a gentleman, and I'm a snob. Well, well, Donald," he went on, "I daresay you may be right. Keep the sovereigns you did keep, and leave the rest with the minister, or those missions you were speaking of. Do what you will with them, in short. At any rate, you won't refuse me a shake of the hand;" and suiting the action to the word, he grasped the hand of the keeper. Then turning on his heel, he sought Glenconan in his "study."

The "study" was of course the most uncomfortable den in the house; and the surroundings, in the shape of rods and landing-nets, account-books, &c., seemed singularly unfavourable to literary pursuits—which was of the less consequence, that the occupier was essentially a man of action, and very little of a bookworm. He listened to his nephew's piece of news with extreme satisfaction. He sympathised with the unexpressed feelings of the young man, in that Jack was relieved from the anxiety of laying himself under pecuniary obligations. Like Jack, perhaps he saw omens of good-luck in the windfall that had come in so very opportunely. And after a short and business-like talk, the couple came to an identical conclusion.

"There, there! that's agreed," said Moray. "You understand that you may count on me to forward your views in any reasonable direction; and in the meantime, you go to Sussex and discuss matters with your father. You are bound to consult him before deciding on anything."

"I could not have a more affectionate adviser, at all events," rejoined the young man, warmly. "And with you to consult upon practical points, I would not take a quarter of a million for my chances. Indeed, if Mr Philpotts had left me a quarter of a million instead of this legacy of £10,000, all the salt and fun would have been taken out of the future."

All things considered, it might well have been supposed that Jack's immediate plans were pretty well settled, as, until he had talked them over with his father, he was pledged to take no decided steps. But being a far-sighted youth, with a craving for sympathy, he thought that it might be well to take his cousin into his confidence. As she might probably be profoundly interested in that future of his, it was only fair that he should have her views about it.

And a less impressionable heart than Jack's might have been touched by the unfeigned delight with which she heard of his good fortune. Indeed natural vanity was nearly persuading him that she must feel a personal interest in the matter.

"What a dear, thoughtful old gentleman Mr Philpotts must have been! What a pity he lived and died a bachelor?" she added, sympathetically.

"I don't know about that," laughed Jack. "You see, if he had left half-a-dozen of children, I should certainly never have come in for my legacy. And," he went on, more seriously, "it may be a matter of the last importance to me."

For Jack was already half forgetting himself in indulging his new sense of freedom. Penniless, he had undertaken to do nothing in the way of love-making; but now he felt that he was hardly

breaking faith in feeling his way for his own satisfaction.

Grace evidently did not understand him in any way. She raised her arched eyebrows with a certain subdued scorn, and her delicate nostrils curled with something like contempt. Having always had the command of money, she thought very little of it; and though a handsome legacy might doubtless be a subject for congratulation, anything like excessive appreciation of it struck her as sordid.

Jack saw the unfortunate impression he had made, and regretted a false step. If he did not explain and apologise, he might do himself irreparable injury with the woman with whom he most desired to stand well. On the other hand, he remembered the promise to her father. His usual presence of mind forsook him, and he stammered, hesitated, and turned painfully red. His confusion served him better than the plainest speech. Grace, with ready feminine intuition, more than half suspected the truth. She rapidly followed Jack's mental struggles, and coloured up like him as she reproached herself for having misconceived him. She fancied she understood the delicacy that had dictated his reserve; she knew that she had nothing to fear in the shape of a precipitate proposal: the blush died away as she recovered self-command, and her composure contrasted with her cousin's confusion. Confused as he was, Jack was quick-sighted as usual. He had seen the blush, and it considerably cheered him, though he did not attach undue importance to it.

"What a deal of luck there is in this world!" he reflected. "If my face had not played me false for once, I must have gone away leaving Grace in utter ignorance; and

then, who knows what might have happened? She might have come to like Leslie as well as I do—or better.”

Then, with something of the wisdom of the serpent, he made an excuse to bring the interview to a conclusion, and left his pretty cousin to her meditations. But being a right-minded youth in the main, and honourable to boot, the idea that he had betrayed himself troubled his conscience. “If my uncle knew what has passed, he might have good reason to be indignant. It was no fault of mine, to be sure; but appearances would be decidedly against me. I believe that the straightest course is the safest, and that I ought to go to him and make a clean breast of it.”

And as he feared to go back on that bold resolution, he struck while the iron was hot, and went straight to his uncle. Do what he would, or blunder as he might, it seemed that his conduct was to commend him to that gentleman. Moray shook his head as he listened to the confession, but at the same time admired his nephew's candour.

“Well, as you say, perhaps you were hardly to blame; and as yet, at least, there can be no great harm done. Grace's heart is free, and you are going to leave us to-morrow.” At what double-barrelled delivery of small-shot Jack winced perceptibly. And he flinched still more unmistakably when this eccentric father went on—

“You have been frank enough with me—too frank, perhaps, with Grace; and so, for her sake, and to countercheck that uncontrollable move of yours, I am decided to be as frank with Leslie as with you, and more frank than I had intended. You agree with me—and it strikes me that Leslie is of our opinion—that Grace is a girl in a

thousand. Hitherto, next to nothing of a will marry of course, soon later; but there is to her upon any matter interrupted with a silent protest, but say with imperturbably. “I say, to throw her at any; and, as I told you before, I not attempt to influence her choice so long as she sets her affection on a gentleman of birth, with a spotless character and decent means. I mentioned, too, she may not be so rich as you suppose. Be that as it may, she must not be hurried to commit herself, by her feelings, or her fancy, or anything else. I don't know much about young ladies or their fancies, more's the pity; but it strikes me that this secret of yours which she has surprised, may fill her thoughts to her harm, and she may possibly build up a romance on it before we know where we are. I promised you fair-play, but nothing more; and my daughter is nearer, and dearer to me than you can be, so I shall speak to Leslie as I have spoken to you, and leave him to regulate his conduct accordingly. From the first, Grace shall have the chance of selection, so far as her limited opportunities go. Moreover, when Leslie has left us, and before the beginning of the grouse-shooting, I shall carry her off, by way of distraction, to pay some visits. There are old family friendships that ought to be renewed, and it is high time that she saw something more of her fellow-creatures.”

And Moray's keen grey eyes, that nevertheless had much of the kindness of his daughter's, looked straight into those of his young favourite. Original or eccentric as his conduct might be, Mr Venables was persuaded that he knew

his own mind, and was acting on some principle, however peculiar—and to a certain extent he did understand, being anything but dull of perception. So far, in all honour and good-nature, they were exchanging passes with the foils. Jack had been more than indiscreet in giving Grace a glimpse at the state of his feelings. Moray parried and returned the thrust by putting Leslie forward as a probable rival, besides opening up a vista of possibilities in the shape of eligible young men in pleasant country-houses. Mr Venables was to have fair-play, but no particular favour; and in the reaction from sanguine expectation to sad despondency, he felt that, in spite of his legacy and his hopes, he was still a mere outsider in the betting. So that Moray's quickly delivered thrust had touched just as he might have intended. At the same time, mortified and disappointed as he was, Jack could not help exercising his active mind on the metaphysical problem presented to it.

"I've heard and seen something of match-making mothers, but hang me if I understand this match-making father! He's devoted to his

daughter, as well he may be; he starts from the incontrovertible truth that he need not throw her at anybody's head; he's a man of the world, if ever there was one,—and yet he practically offers Grace to me or to Leslie, and apparently proposes, moreover, to hawk her about in half of the houses of the Highlands, as if he were bound to match her against time under heavy penalties. What I see most clearly in the business is, that he credits Leslie and me with the tempers of angels, or he would never cast such an apple of discord between us. But if I do have Ralph for a rival, it shall be all fair and above-board between us. I don't forget that I owe him my life, though the time may come when it will cost me something to remember it."

And indeed Moray, who meant excellently well by both his young kinsmen, being chiefly preoccupied with the future of his child, had altogether ignored the awkward complications that might come of the stirring up of angry passions. Undoubtedly the fond father, unconsciously to himself, seemed to be playing the mischief-maker as well as the match-maker.

THE ROYAL MAIL.

In one of those pleasant works associated with our childhood, when learning was made easy by the means of "Parent's Assistants" and "Compendiums of Knowledge," a father astonishes his young family by the enumeration of the number of persons employed in their service. He mentions amongst others that he has always a messenger ready to bring him a letter from almost any part of the civilised world. The children are at first perfectly astonished at the amount of untold wealth their father must possess to maintain such an establishment, when the shrewdest of the family suggests that these messengers are paid for by the Post-office. There was, however, a great moral in the parent's teaching, for the universality of a blessing by no means diminishes the advantage to the individual. The warmth of the sun is not the less a blessing because it shines on the just and unjust. To all intents and purposes her Majesty's mails are carried for the interest of every individual in the country: whether he dwell in the palace, in the garret, or the cellar—all are equally served; privileged classes are unknown to the letter-carrier. If ever there was a democratic community, it is that of letters. For some hours peer and peasant—even her Majesty and the village cobbler—are thrown together in the letter-bag, and arrive the same hour at their destination. In no other department of the public service is there so entire an absence of any social distinction of rank or

wealth. The sorter cares little whether he handles the coronet of the earl or the thimble-wax impression of John Smith, the indorsement of the statesman or the pot-hooks of the child,—all are tossed together into the bag in close companionship until they arrive at their final destination.

This equality was not, however, fully developed until Sir Rowland Hill introduced that great change—greater than any preceding social change—the penny postage. Until then, correspondence was practically the privilege of the rich. When letters were charged by the distance, and the whole system was based on differential rates, the poorer classes derived little advantage from any postal arrangements. The penny postage, so far as the masses were concerned, was the commencement of the postal service in Great Britain. Until then, families broken up and separated were frequently without any intercommunication for years, and had to resort to the most curious expedients to avoid paying postage. Sir Rowland Hill used to relate the following anecdote:—

"Some years ago, when it was the practice to write the name of a member of Parliament for the purpose of franking a newspaper, a friend of mine, previous to starting on a tour into Scotland, arranged with his family a plan of informing them of his progress and state of health, without putting them to the expense of postage. It was managed thus: he carried with him a number of old newspapers, one of which he put into the post daily. The postmark and the date showed his

progress, and the state of his health was evinced by the selection of the names from a list previously agreed upon, with which the newspaper was franked. Sir Francis Burdett, I recollect, denoted vigorous health.

"Once on the poet's [Coleridge's] visit to the Lake district, he halted at the door of a wayside inn at the moment when the rural postman was delivering a letter to the barmaid of the place. On receiving it she turned it over and over in her hand, and then asked the postage of it. The postman demanded a shilling. Sighing deeply, the girl handed the letter back, saying she was too poor to pay the required sum. The poet at once offered to pay the postage, and did so. The messenger had scarcely left the place when the young barmaid confessed she had learnt all she was likely to learn from the letter; that she had only been practising a preconceived trick—she and her brother having agreed that a few hieroglyphics on the back of the letter should tell her all she wanted to know, whilst the letter would contain no writing."—*The Royal Mail*, pp. 181, 182.

When we consider the interests of hearts and homes, it is clear that nothing has tended so much to add to the happiness of the world as the Post-office; it unites kingdoms and societies, strengthens the ties of family and affection, relieves the minds of the anxious, and soothes the sufferer in his sickness and loneliness. It is a trite observation that men never value blessings until they are deprived of them. The expedition and regularity of the Post-office service is most appreciated when there is any mishap, and a mail is delayed a day, or even a few hours. What consternation is caused by a missing mail-bag! the non-arrival of an expected letter has been known to agitate even the most gentle natures. The magnitude of the interest in the Post-office may in some measure be realised when we read in

the twenty-ninth report of the Postmaster-General, that 1323 millions of letters passed through the British Post-office last year. What imagination can grapple with such stupendous figures? Four million letters stamped in the United Kingdom every day! And the average rate of letters per head of the population is 36 in the United Kingdom; in the United States it is 21; in France it is 15; in Germany 13; in Italy 6; and in Spain 5.

No other period can be compared to the last half-century in the marvellous progress science has made, and in the application of science to the conquest of time and space, and most especially in its application to the postal service throughout *Europe*. We underline *Europe*, for we learn from Marco Polo that the post was established in China before our Norman Conquest. Every 25 miles there were post-stations, called "jambas," and frequently as many as 300 or 400 horses kept at one of these stations. There were 10,000 of these stations in the empire, and more than 200,000 horses are said to have been engaged in the service; but this gigantic empire, which combined marvellous knowledge with the lowest barbarism, walled in its civilisation, and the very existence of the empire itself was scarcely realised at the time when the first post known in Europe was planned by Charlemagne in A.D. 807. This, however, led to little result, and it was not until the thirteenth century that the Hanse Towns established a regular post. This federation of republics required constant communication, for their commercial interests were very great, and a rapid interchange of views and opinions was essential for its continuance. A post was said to

have been organized in the reign of the Emperor Maximilian by the Princes of the house of Thurn and Taxis. At all events, at the present time that family enjoys certain privileges in consequence of the services they have rendered to the postal department.

It is in this country, where manufactures flourished, and the British flag was seen flying in the most distant seas, that the importance of intercommunication was most felt. The rise and progress of this vast agent of commerce and civilisation cannot fail to be interesting to a large class of readers, who will derive a large amount of valuable and amusing information from two works of great merit; the one entitled 'The Royal Mail,' a new publication, which stands at the head of this article—and the other 'Her Majesty's Mails,' by William Lewins, published in 1864, in which the history of the rise of the Post-office is told from its earliest commencement. It seems that the establishment of a regular riding-post dates from Edward IV.; but private letters were sent by special messengers, called *nuncii*, so far back as the time of Edward II. In general, these *nuncii* were employed in the Government service. The first recognised head of the Post-office as a Government department dates from Henry VIII. The rebel lords, who played so conspicuous a part in his reign, improved on the royal posts, and had regular messengers employed between Hull and York, York and Durham, Durham and Newcastle. By the 2 & 3 Edward VI., a charge of one penny per mile was fixed on all horses used by the post-riders. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the expenses of the Post-office amounted to £6000 a year. This was classed under the head of the "wages and entertainment of the

ordinary post." The post-road from London to Berwick followed exactly the line of the present Great North Road. At this time there was a post from London to Ireland, *via* Holyhead; one to Bristol, and to Dover. Occasionally there were extraordinary post, especially when any unwelcome news arrived from France, "for the speedy advertisement of the same." In the early part of the Queen's reign, the Flemings, who were driven out of Flanders by the persecutions of the Alva and Philip II., were permitted to have a post of their own. Some time after, they claimed, says Stowe, the right of having their own postmaster. This claim was not, however, long recognised, and Thomas Randolph was appointed the first Postmaster of the English and foreign offices.

Under the Tudor dynasty a new social era dawned on England, and with that came the rapid extension of the postal service: this again led to the progress of ideas, as intelligence was more speedily spread through the country. Crabbe tells us—

"A master-passion is the love of news."

The "*συνα το νεον*;" is a query not limited to the Athenian, or to any clime or age. Until the age of Queen Bess, remote villages were ignorant even of the most important events which occurred in the metropolis. Perhaps such ignorance was bliss, and they were happier in their isolation; but when once the Government couriers were introduced, although they were not the bearers of private letters, their advent into the village was a great event. The travelling pedlars, with their packs of goods and news, now lost much of their importance. It was only at the close of the Queen's reign that the riding couriers were superseded by

carts or rude waggons, in imitation of one which, at the commencement of her reign, had been invented for her Majesty's use. Until then the Queen had, like every one else, travelled on horseback. Judges rode the circuit in jack-boots; ladies mostly on pillions, fastened behind their cavaliers. In this primitive style the Queen, on her first entry to the city, rode behind the Lord Chancellor. We can scarcely picture her Majesty Queen Victoria trusting herself behind Lord Selborne. It was, however, when a Scotch king ascended the throne of England, that the absolute necessity of greater intercourse between England and Scotland led to an immediate improvement in the post. Private correspondence was then taken into consideration, and postal rates were first established. The charge was twopence for a single letter for any distance under 80 miles, and fourpence from 80 to 140 miles, sixpence for any longer distance in England, eightpence to Scotland; but it must be remembered that the value of money was ten times greater than at present, so it is not surprising that, although so much was done to develop the postal arrangements, there was no increase in the revenue: the rates were quite prohibitory. At that time few persons could afford to pay sixpence—that is, five shillings—for a single letter. The post-messengers, therefore, had very little to do, and the smuggling of letters through the country became a regular trade: the consequence was, that in 1680 the revenue from the Post-office only amounted to five thousand a year. By a remarkable coincidence, about this time a Mr. John Hill published a slight work in favour of reducing all postal rates to one penny, whatever the distance. It

would be curious to know whether this pamphlet and the name in any way suggested the idea of a uniform penny rate to Mr. Rowland Hill.

It was at this date the Post-office was for the first time considered of sufficient importance to occupy the attention of Parliament. When an Act was introduced "to settle the postage in England, Scotland, and Ireland," in the course of the debate great importance was attached to the commercial and social interests involved in the Post-office. Strange, indeed, that these had been so long ignored. Lord Strickland said, "Nothing can more assist trade and commerce than this intercourse." All parties were agreed that the bill was good for commerce; and from this time the Post-office was to become an important part of the revenue. It does not appear that the improved organisation of the Post-office led to the acceleration of the mails. The post took four days between London and Dover; and oxen had frequently to be employed to drag the carriage over the broken roads, and in no instance did the pace ever exceed three miles an hour. In a work called 'The Grand Concern of England,' published in 1673, it seems that the roads were so bad, that when a family intended to travel, they frequently sent on servants to investigate the country and report upon the most promising track. Fuller says he frequently saw as many as six oxen employed in dragging a single person to church. During floods, it was not unusual for passengers to remain at some town for days together, until the waters had subsided. We extract from 'The Royal Mail' a most graphic description of the state of the roads at this date:—

"The first four miles out of Edinburgh, on the road towards London,

were described in the Privy Council Record of 1680 to have been in so wretched a state that passengers were in danger of their lives, 'either by their coaches overturning, their horses falling, their carts breaking, their loads casting, and horse stumbling, the poor people with their burdens on their backs sorely grieved and discouraged; moreover, strangers do often exclaim thereat.' . . . The common carrier from Edinburgh to Selkirk, a distance of thirty-eight miles, required a fortnight for the journey going and returning.

"An express messenger conveying the news of the death of Charles II., who died on the 6th of February 1685, was received in Edinburgh at one o'clock on the morning of the 10th February. . . . In 1688 it required three months to convey the tidings of the abdication of James II. of England and VII. of Scotland to the Orkney Islands."

Even so late as 1703, in a journey made by Prince George of Denmark from Windsor to Retford,

"The length of way was only forty miles, but fourteen hours were consumed in traversing it; whilst almost every mile was signalised by the overturn of a carriage, or its temporary swamping in the mire. Even the royal chariot would have fared no better than the rest had it not been for the relays of peasants who poised and kept it erect by strength of arm, and shouldered it forward the last nine miles, in which tedious operation six good hours were consumed."

The introduction of post-carriages was not made without a certain interference with existing interests; and when it was seen that the old mode of travelling on horseback was to be permanently interfered with, great opposition arose on the part of the post-riders. Pamphlets were written to denounce the change. In one of these it was asserted that the introduction of stage-coaches was the greatest evil "that had happened of late years to these kingdoms." The pam-

phlet or in "an idle in our own an idle of body; as they weary and as, if they ride a few -quite unfit to travel on horse and are not able to endure it, snow, or rain, or to lodge in the fields." The stage-coaches cannot have been very comfortable. M. Sobrière, who landed at Dover at the close of Charles III.'s reign, had not a very exalted idea of the merits of the new post-coaches. He says: "That I might not have to use them, I went from Dover to London in a waggon. I was drawn by six horses, placed one after another, and driven by a waggoner who walked by the side of them. He was clothed in black, and appeared in all things like another St George. He had a brave Montero on his head, and was a merry fellow, fancied he made a figure, and seemed mightily pleased with himself." These stage-waggons, which M. Sobrière refers to were frequently made use of for passengers as well as merchandise. Smollett and Hogarth have each in their way given an animated description of the strange society that was bundled together in these rough and rude conveyances. In William III.'s reign, a string of waggons travelled between London and Liverpool, starting from Aldermanbury every Monday and Thursday, occupying ten days on the journey in summer, and twelve in winter. On most roads the carriages never changed horses, and were so proverbially slow in the North of England, that the publicans of Furness, in Lancashire, when they saw the conductors of the travelling merchandise-trains appear in sight on the summit of Wrynose Hill, on their journey between Whitehaven and Kendal, were jocularly said to begin to

brew their beer, to have a stock of good drink ready by the time the travellers reached the village.

Those who lived in the happy days of post-horses and royal mails can recall their sensations when the mere act of locomotion was enjoyment. It was the well-known saying of Dr. Johnson, that there was no greater luxury than to travel in a post-chaise and four; and, he added, "especially at another person's expense." But without this costly indulgence, royal mails and post-coaches rendered travelling—provided the journey was not a very long one—a great pleasure. The box-seat on a well-appointed coach was the best cure for fashionable ailments that any physician could prescribe. Mr Macadam had brought our roads to the highest state of efficiency. The smart coach with the beautiful team, the driver and guard in their scarlet liveries, added, wherever they passed, to the interest of the landscape and to the charm of country life. The arrival of the mail was always the great event of the day in town and village. Even at night, as it rattled over the pavement, the tramp of the horses and the twang of the guard's horn, if it roused the light sleepers from their slumber, the awakening was not unpleasing. Well does Mr Hyde, who has for twenty-five years held important situations in the Post-office, describe in 'The Royal Mail,' the pleasure and excitement of the travelling in our youth:—

"The mail-coach days," he says, "had charms and attractions for travellers, if they at the same time had their drawbacks; the bustle and excitement of the start, when the horses were loosed and the driver let them have rein under the eyes of interested and admiring spectators; the exhilarating gallop as a good pace was achieved on the open country-road;

the keen relish of the meals, more especially of breakfast, at the neatly kept and hospitable inn; the blithe note of the guard's horn, as a turnpike-gate or the end of a stage was approached; and the hurried changing of horses from time to time as the journey progressed. Ever-varying scene is the characteristic of the occasion: the village with its rustic quiet, and odd characters, who were sure to present themselves as the coach flew by; the fresh and blooming fields; the soft and pastoral downs; the scented hedgerows in May and June; the stretches of road embowered with wood; the farmer's children swinging on a gate or overtopping a fence, and cheering lustily with their small voices as the coach swept along.

"Or, on occasions of great national triumph—when, for example, some important victory crowned our arms—the coach, decked out with ribbons or green leaves, would be the bearer of the joyous news down into the country,—the driver and the guard, as the official representatives of the Crown for the moment, being the heroes of the hour."

This graceful and picturesque description shows that the work of the Post-office has not blunted the keenness of Mr Hyde's perceptions or his sense of the poetry of life. But there was something more than poetic interest in the olden days of travel. Moreover, it was something to feel our travelling superiority over all other nations. While the lumbering diligences in France, and the still heavier *eil-wagens* in Germany, were driven by postilions, whose jack-boots were alone a sufficient weight for a horse, at a rate of five miles an hour, the average speed of all our mails—including stoppages—was nine miles an hour. But the fast coaches covered sometimes twelve miles within the hour. The London and Shrewsbury mail accomplished 184 miles in 18 hours, London and Holyhead 268 miles was travelled in 27 hours, London and

Exeter 171 miles in 17 hours. This Quicksilver Mail was supposed to be the fastest in England; and there were short distances when the horses were spinning over the ground at the rate of fifteen miles an hour. The annual procession of the mails on the King's birthday was a sight which, while it can never be seen again, will never be forgotten by those who have seen it. George IV., who was born on the 12th of August, changed the annual celebration of his birthday to April 23d. The mail-coaches then went in procession from Millbank to Lombard Street, about twelve o'clock. The horses belonging to the different mails had entirely new harness; the guards and coachmen, postmen and postboys, were all dressed in their new scarlet uniforms. From Lombard Street the cavalcade passed through the principal streets of the metropolis. It was a grand gala-day, and a display such as no other country could ever show—horses, coaches, harness, all of the best, and the coachmen vying with one another to show off the teams to the best advantage. The drivers and guards wore large bouquets of flowers; the coaches were newly painted and emblazoned with the Royal arms.

“In the cramped interior of the vehicles were closely packed buxom dames and blooming lasses, the fair passengers arrayed in coal-scuttle bonnets and in canary-coloured or scarlet silks. . . . Heading the procession was the oldest-established mail, which would be the Bristol. On the King's birthday, 1834, there were 27 coaches in the procession. They all wore hammer-cloths. Sherman's mails were drawn by black horses, and on these occasions their harness was of red morocco. Many country squires who were anxious that their best horses should have a few turns

in the mail-coaches, sent up horses to figure in the procession. — The Royal Mail, pp. 73, 74.

The whole pageant was worthy of the occasion—a celebration of the birthday of its sovereign.

Steam is the one great leveller. In its progress all exceptional excellence disappears. No country could rival England in roads, in horses, and coaches, in the beauty of our ships, and the skill of our seamen. The age of these superiorities has passed for ever. The rail has superseded Macadam; stokers and pokers take the place of coachmen and guards; turret-ships and ironclads have swept away our glorious line-of-battle ships and beautiful frigates; engineers are in demand instead of able seamen. The Continent can produce just as good engineers as our own, whether it be to drive the mails or work in the engine-room. Stokers and pokers belong to every clime; but the smart drivers of her Majesty's mails, and the old salts sung by Didbin, belong to the historic past, and we are placed on the same level as all nations, with the same monotony of qualifications.

The earliest Postmaster-General and post-agents had not an easy time of it. The mails were so irregular, and the complaints so constant, that the ill-paid duties of the former became very onerous; and the post-agents, especially the packet-agents, in time of war were placed in situations not devoid of danger. The instructions to all the packet-agents, who were practically in command of the boats, were—“You must run when you can, fight when you can no longer run, and throw the mails overboard when you cannot fight.” We must refer our readers for most interesting anecdotes of the mail-packet service to ‘The

Royal Mail,' in the chapter headed "Mail-Packets." The vessels were clearly not of a high order of excellence, for one report, says; "We doe find that in blowing weather they take in soe much water that the men are constantly wet through, and can noe ways go below, being forced to keep the hatches shut to save the vessel from sinking." So perilous was the service, that there was a scale of pensions for wounds. The loss of an eye was £4, both eyes £12. Nor were the letters better protected than their carriers. "We are concerned," says one agent, "to tell you that we find the letters brought by the boat are so consumed by the rats we cannot find out to whom they belong." All Government letters were carried free. Even within our memory very curious articles have been sent by the Foreign Office messengers, but we do not imagine such commodities as the following were ever franked:—

"*Imprimis.* 'Fifteen couple of hounds going to the King of the Romans with a free pass.'

"Item. 'Two maid servants going as laundresses to my lord ambassador.'

"Item. 'Doctor Chrichton, carrying with him a cow and divers necessaries.'

"Item. Two bales of stockings for the use of the ambassador.'"

In those days members signed large packets of covers at once, and sold them to their friends; and so little care was taken, that thousands of letters passed with forged signatures.

The changes from the post-riders to mail-coaches, and from mail-coaches to railways, are not more remarkable than the vast change made in our postal system by the introduction of the penny postage. Sir Rowland Hill has always been considered the orig-

inator of the penny postage; but in fact the idea had been started by Professor Babbage some years before in his work on economy of machinery and manufactures, in which he demonstrated that if the cost of carriage could be reduced, the result would be a cheaper rate of postage, and a great increase in the number of letters. It was, however, Sir Rowland Hill who devoted his time to the completion of the scheme; and in 1837 he embodied it in the pamphlet entitled "Post-office Reform, its importance and practicability." This created a great sensation, more especially in the mercantile world. He proved that while the population was rapidly increasing, the Post-office revenue was diminishing, and this was chiefly owing to the high rate of postage and the temptation which it held out for smuggling—whole bales of letters being sent from one town to another as ordinary goods. While in his able pamphlet the subject was exhausted, he maintained that the 76 millions of letters, the number which passed through the Post-office in 1839, was capable of a large increase; "that it should form a distinguished part in the great work of national education, and of becoming a benefaction and a blessing to mankind." He concluded with proposing—(1) a reduction in the rate to a penny a letter, weighing not more than half an ounce; (2) increased speed in the delivery of letters; (3) more frequent opportunities for the despatch of letters; (4) simplification in all the arrangements with the view to economy. After an examination by a Royal Commission, and a full investigation by a committee of the House of Commons, Mr Hill's plan was adopted by the Legislature in 1839, and came into operation in 1840, when the

number of letters increased from 76 millions to 169 millions. The new scheme was received with general approval by the country; but not so by the Government and the Post-office authorities, who regarded it as suicidal, and most probably likely to be very injurious to the revenue. And certainly these views were not unreasonable. The average charge for a letter in 1837 was tenpence: it was evident, therefore, that to arrive at the same result when reduced to a penny, the number of letters must increase tenfold—whereas in the first year they had only doubled; and even now that the letters have increased to the enormous amount of 1333 millions, it is a question whether, when we consider the increase of population and popular education, the revenue has not suffered by the change, although the net revenue is this year £2,687,000. But in 1837 the change was dreaded by the authorities for other than financial reasons. Lord Lichfield, the Postmaster-General at that time, described the scheme as “wild, visionary, and extravagant.” The walls of the Post-office, he added, would burst; the whole area on which the building stands would not be large enough to receive the clerks and the letters. In the first instance a fourpenny rate was proposed; but this did not meet the views of either party, and in 1840 a uniform penny rate was adopted.

That the penny postage has added to the happiness and comfort of the nation, and greatly benefited all the commercial classes, cannot be doubted; and yet it took many years before its opponents were fairly convinced of its advantages. While the number of letters increased rapidly, the expenses of the Post-office at first

increased still faster. Of the post-offices did, as Lord Lichfield predicted everywhere enlarged accommodation had to be found. It supplanted the mails, at an enormous additional expense. For instance, in 1844, a coach-prietor in the north of England actually paid to the Post-office department the sum of £200 for what he could really have conveyed twice a-day between Lancaster and Carlisle; now the Post-office the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway £18,000 annually for the same service, and the entire sum paid to the railway companies in 1863 does not fall far short of the whole of the Post-office expenses in 1839.

The progress of the Post-office since the final establishment of the penny post has exceeded all the most sanguine expectations. Between 1839 and 1880, day-mails, rural posts, and free deliveries were established on an enlarged scale. In 1840 the number of rural post-offices was 3000; they now exceed 8000. As to free deliveries, it has been promised that soon the “most remote and inaccessible parts of our country, the nooks and crannies of the land, will possess the rural postman.” When we recollect the work done in the post-offices, it is something quite extraordinary. The Post-office is not only responsible for all home and foreign correspondence; but every postmaster has charge of the Book-post department, the Telegraph, the Money-order Office, the Savings Bank, and now the Parcel Post. A postmaster or mistress now, in any considerable village, must find their day pretty well occupied, and have little to devote to the shop in which formerly it was in general situated—placed so that those who came to post letters or buy stamps

were induced to make purchases. In France the *bureaux de tabac* are an important part of the Government patronage: the pay is about 600 francs a-year. But a *bureau de tabac* is considered worth from £300 to £400 a-year. The owners have a monopoly of the sale of stamps or post orders frequently remain to smoke, or lay in a stock of snuff or tobacco.

Among the sights of London the General Post-office is the most remarkable. No department of the public service conveys a grander idea of the vast enterprise, the commercial greatness, and social requirements of the empire. Throughout the whole day every part of the extensive building presents a busy scene; but it is about six in the evening that the great excitement commences.

"Now it is, that small boys of eleven and twelve years of age, panting Sinbad-like under the weight of large bundles of newspapers, manage to dart about and make rapid sorties into the other ranks of boys, utterly disregarding the cries of the official policemen, who vainly endeavour to reduce the tumult into something like post-office order. They will whizz their missiles of intelligence over other people's heads, now and then sweeping off hats and caps with the force of shot. The gathering every moment increases in number; arms, legs, sacks, baskets, heads, bundles, and woollen comforters—for who ever saw a newspaper boy without that appendage?—seem to be getting into a state of confusion and disagreeable communism, and yet 'the cry is still they come.'"
—The Royal Mail, p. 356.

At that hour, instead of the wide slits for letters and papers, the shutters themselves are thrown open, to receive the storm of letters and papers which are thrown in. Every opening is besieged with an impet-

uous crowd of men, women, and boys, who defy all the efforts of the police to keep order, in their anxiety to rid themselves of the huge bundles with which they are laden before the last stroke of the hour of six. Those who are prevented approaching the windows hurl their packages over the heads of others who bar the approach. Sacks and baskets of letters are shovelled into the spaces prepared to receive them. When the clock commences to strike six, the rush becomes greater and greater—the interest more and more intense. One, two, three—the struggle of the outsiders is desperate—four, five, six. And at the stroke the windows fall simultaneously, and all is over. A sudden stillness approaching to awe falls on the multitude. Those who are behindhand may consign their charge calmly into any post-office they pass by, where it will be stamped with the ominous words "Too late!"

The interest of the Post-office is now transferred to the interior of the building. There in large halls may be seen hundreds of clerks lifting, arranging, stamping piles of letters. Heaps of correspondence and papers are lying on the floors and raked up into large baskets, and carried by lifts or on rails to various parts of the establishment. A number of officers are employed all this time in endeavouring to restore wrappers to newspapers which have been carelessly tied up. Unfastened and torn letters are conveyed to a different part of the building, and the greatest care is taken to endeavour to find out their proper destinations. It is incredible the number of letters that are posted open, without any address whatever. Then there are letters insufficiently stamped and fastened, which con-

tain every variety of female ornament and fashion, jewelry, fans, feathers; not to mention medicines, pill-boxes, many of which fall on the floor when handled by the clerks, and, with as much care as is possible, are replaced in their proper cases. We are called, and are rather proud of being so styled, a practical careful people: the lost luggage in cabs and at stations testifies that we are exactly the contrary. From £12,000 to £14,000 in money, with no address, or misdirected, and Bank Government bills, money orders, bills of exchange, that pass through the office which has to rectify blunders, amounts to a very large sum. The trouble it is to discover the owners may well be imagined. In some cases it is impossible: so the report tells us that many presents, such as rings, brooches, various ornaments, never reach their destination, as they are unaccompanied by any letter. Those become the property of the Crown.

In 1855 the first annual Report of the Post-office was presented to Parliament; and there are no Blue-books which afford so much interest. This interest is communicated to all the chiefs of the department and to the body of the officials—for there is none in which there exists such a hearty *esprit de corps*. The whole nation have greatly recognised the indefatigable zeal and great ability of the late Mr. Fawcett: it would be sufficient praise to say that he adequately filled the place of Lord John Manners, who left amid universal expressions of regret, leaving behind him pleasant memories, not only political, but personal. Lord John Manner's reports are especially full of valuable information. In that of 1877 he states that, during fifteen months,

the number of letters in the Returned Letter Office 5,897,000; that 33,100 letters posted without any address 78,000 stamps were put loose; that not unfrequently letters were put into letter-boxes by mistake for letter-boxes; a snake escaped from a letter-box and a live horned toad was sent from Liverpool from the United Kingdom. The report does not state whether it subsisted on the contents of the letter. In the same report we learn that postmen must be peculiarly obnoxious to dogs; for in one town alone 20 per cent. of the letter-carriers were bitten by dogs in that year.

These details are curious, but there is a deeper interest connected with the postal service. It has been already remarked, nowhere are the "*Fraternité* and *Egalité*" principles carried out so consistently as in the letter-box: the coronet of the earl jostles with the pauper's wafer; letters of all shapes and colours; tidings of life and death, hope and despair; protestations of affection indignant refusals, demands for urgent payments, supplications for delay, announcements of birth, last wills and testaments, love-sonnets and sermons, affections and hatreds, blessings and railings,—all the varied complicated relations of a vast artificial society, mingle in the letter-box and mail-bag. Do we ever think, when we see a mail rushing through space, what heart mysteries and life-interests it carries with it? If to the thoughtful mind the mere presence of a mail-train is so suggestive, it may well be imagined how many tales of sorrow and romance are forced upon the attention of the Post-office authorities or even subordinate employees; what anxieties arise when

a foreign mail is overdue. Moreover, to write in haste and repent at leisure is the experience of many an impetuous correspondent, who is ignorant or oblivious of the rule that a letter once posted can never be taken out of the box, that it becomes the property of the Postmaster-General until it is delivered to the person to whom it is addressed. The reports give many instances of the painful results of haste and carelessness; "On one occasion a gentlemanly-looking person called and expressed a fear that he had enclosed two letters in wrong envelopes, and that all his prospects in life depended on his having his letters back, and correcting the mistake; inasmuch as they revealed plans which he had adopted to save two mercantile houses in the same line of business, whose interests clashed at every point." A similar blunder occurred in a more delicate affair, when a young lady was most urgent to have her letters returned, as she had accepted the wrong offer of marriage. The local postmaster was unable to resist her earnest entreaties, and thus prevented a painful catastrophe. But a whole romance might be written on the following incident: A young lady, who had been engaged to a prosperous young manufacturer, was informed, a few days before the marriage was fixed for, that the firm was insolvent. Not a moment was to be lost, and a letter was written and posted, breaking the engagement; when, within two hours, it was discovered that the report was entirely unfounded. The report continues: "The daughter with her parents rushed to the post-office, and no words can describe the scene—the appeals, the tears, the wringing of hands, the united entreaties of the family, to have the fatal letter re-

stored, but, alas! all was vain, the rule admitted of no exception."

The Blind Office is perhaps the part of the building of the greatest interest to visitors. Here is a number of clerks, selected from the most efficient of the officers, have to decipher addresses, which to the inexperienced would seem utterly illegible or unintelligible. He should find it difficult what bag to place the enclosed in—

"Coneyach Lunentick
A Siliam."

The clerk strikes his pen through the address, and writes—

"Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum."

Again—

"Obern Yenen,"

is by a stroke of the pen converted into

"Holborn Union."

"Ann Megs,
Oileywhite,
Amshire."

It is seen that Ann Megs resides in the

"Isle of Wight,
Hampshire."

"For Mister Willy wot brinds de Baber in Lang Caster ware te gal is,"

puzzled the officers, until it was discovered it was intended for the editor of a Lancaster paper where the jail is.

There was less difficulty in

"Queen Vic Tory at Winer Casel,
and to the King of Rusheyn.
Feoren ith wspeed."

Lord John Manners gives a great many entertaining applications made to the office, and extraordinary letters received.

"May 1878.

"MY LORD,—I ask you for some information about finding out persons

who are missing. I want to find out my mother and sisters who are in Australia I believe. If you would find them out for me please, let me know by return of Post, and also your charge at the lowest. Yours, &c."

"January 14, 1878.

"We heard in the paper about 12 months back, Mary Ann —, the servant girl in London was dead. Please send it to the Printers office by return of post whether there was a small fortune left for —."

"SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS U.S.

1 Jan. 1878.

"Mr Postmaster if you would be so kind as to seek for us work as we are two colored young men of — Illinois, and would like to come to England and get work as Coachmen or race horse trainers, as we have been experiance for twelve years practising training—if any further information about it we can be recommended to any one that wish to hire us, pleas to advertise it in the papers for us." 4

"KANSAS

Feb 16—1878.

"HONERAD SIR,—My Grandfather Mr John — made a will on or about 22 Oct. 18-- dated at — leaving to his son, my Father, £1000, the interest to be paid to him half-yearly, the prinsaple to be divided among his children at his death. My father died on the — last leaving myself and one brother who wishes you to look up & collect the money for us."

"SIR,— i rite a Line two see if you hard Enny thing of my husband — that was left at — ill. please will you rite back by return of post as we are in great trobble."

"To Controll of the
Dead Office,
Newcastle."

Dec 31 1877.

"John — acting as Farmer here would be very much obliged to the Postmaster at — if he would be so good as to name a suitable party at — to whom he might sell a 30 stone pig of good quality well—for he understands it is the best place to sell. The pig is now quite ready for killing."

April 1878.

"SIR,—Will you, if you please, let me know if there is such a gentleman as Mr — in —. i believe he is a Chirch Clurdgman. There is a young man in — who has been engaged to my sister and he says Mrs — at — is his sister. i should very much like to know, if you will oblige me by sending. i thought if Mrs — was his sister i would rite and ask for his character because he is a stranger to us all.—please oblige
" — — —."

" — KENT.

"SIR,—Will you please inform me if there is to be a Baby show this year at Woolwich; if so, where it is to be holden, and what day.

"I have enclosed — stamp."

"FRANCE.

"A Monsieur le

"Directeur de la poste de Londres.

"J'ai cinquante trois ans. Veuillez être assez bon de me faire réponse pour me donner des résultats sur l'existence de Madame ——. Si par-fois elle était toujours veuve je voudrais lui faire la proposition de lui demander sa main d'après que j'en aurais des nouvelles. En attendant, Monsieur, votre réponse.—J'ai l'honneur d'être, &c."

Anecdotes connected with the Post-office abound in many recent works. We may mention especially the autobiographies of Anthony

In addition to the above extracts from the Blue-books, in 'The Royal Mail' will be found a chapter, headed "Curious Letters addressed to the Post-office," which contains a fund of amusing anecdote. The whole volume is really the romance of a public office.

Trollope and Edmund Yates, both of these distinguished *litterateurs* having filled important posts in that department : it is remarkable how many men of genius have commenced life in St Martin's-le-Grand. And we may add how deeply the sympathies of noble and generous ladies have been interested in the welfare of the excellent subordinates in this public department. While Mr Fawcett devoted his wonderful energies to the development of the machinery and the working of all branches of the service, Mrs Fawcett gave all her heart to the improvement of the homes of those who are toiling for our benefit. Lady John Manners has, with the assistance of some philanthropic and benevolent ladies, furnished rooms in different localities, where temporary rest and shelter is provided for the postmen during the brief respite from their

daily toil, and where they can appreciate these generous efforts of kind and sympathising friends. And certainly no class of public servants are worthier of kindness and sympathy—while of all our State departments there is none of which we may be justly prouder.

Time is passing rapidly. We have visited the principal offices. The hall-clock is silently approaching the hour of eight, when the bags must be all sealed and ready to leave. At five minutes to eight all is bustle and activity ; at five minutes after eight the halls are silent and deserted, the bags have been collected and placed in the mail-vans, which dash off to the different railway stations. A few minutes more and the mail-trains—those messengers of joy, of sorrow, of hope, rest and unrest—will be rushing through the darkness to their several destinations.

THE WATERS OF HERCULES.—PART X.

CHAPTER XXXI.—DULCETIA AND DAGGERS.

"And she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man,"

—*Midsommer Night Dream.*

EVENING came,—perhaps her last evening of freedom, thought Gretchen, as, alone in her room, she stood by the open window, and allowed the night air to fan her hot cheeks.

It was a bright and silvery night for the world, but not for the Hercules valley.

Elsewhere the moon is glorifying points of rock, and striking cold flashes from the water; here the rock and the water sleep untouched. But rarely the sun shines into the very heart of the valley, and more rarely still the moon. Moonlight here is a distant dream. Looking down the valley, where the space is wider and shallower, it is seen lying, a transparent veil upon the hills—a still cold veil which hides nothing, and beautifies everything. Here the moon must have risen very high, before it can pour its light-floods down the flanks of these jealously guarding mountains. And yet the invisible moon is felt, for without the moon the night sky could not be of this transparent, quivering paleness. Never do the mountains look so black as they do when, on nights like these, each ridge on their summit, and each tiniest curve and angle of outline, is thrown out in startling contrast to the shining background. Never do the rocks frown more heavily, nor the valley wrap itself up more gloomily in its depth of darkness, than when the rest of the world is flooded and silvered with the moonlight.

Wait long enough, and presently strange effects will be seen on the hills opposite. The edge of the disc has reached the level of the hill-top, and the first white beam trembles on the mountain-side. Timidly it touches some tree, and that tree, which a minute ago was only one in the million of other trees, becomes forthwith a thing of wonderful beauty. It is the favoured and chosen object of the moonlight; the moon has elected it out of the black mass around, and lavishes its favours richly. It was but a black pine a minute ago—it is now a tree, worthy of fairy-land; its stem is glorified, its branches are fancifully beautified, each tiny twig is dreamily idealised. The black pines around wait in sullen patience until their turn shall come. To some of them it will come, to some of them not; for it is rarely, very rarely, that the moon will pierce to the heart of this spot in the valley. It is in vain that the Djernis sings songs to the moonlight, wooing her now with laughter and now with sobs; the moonlight is not tempted by the enchanter's voice, and will not let herself be drawn down to the enchanter's embrace.

It was such an evening as this to-day—glory everywhere else, and blackness here. But the valley had another voice to-night besides the moaning Djernis; for Dr Kovics, as a last melancholy contribution to the amusement of the

fast-waning public, was wandering about at the foot of the hill, making night hideous with some bulky wind-instrument of awful power. The public was decidedly amused, but scarcely as the doctor had intended. Some ungrateful people laughed, some shut their ears, others their windows.

Gretchen also shut her window at last. She must have been in a very unusual state of mind, for she did not see anything either absurd or irritating in the doctor's *Flügelhorn*.

The air which his instrument wailed forth was familiar to her. It was a Roumanian song, a favourite among the peasants of the valley,—a rough ditty, treating of the "Herb Forgetfulness"—the magic plant whose taste destroys memory, and which the dams of the flock search on the mountain-tops, in order to blot out the memory of their butchered lambs.

Even the words were not strange to Gretchen: she knew by heart the verse in which the dying Roumanian girl calls on her lover to seek forgetfulness in the mountain-herb:—

"Haste thee to the hills, my love,
Since cold death doth bid us part;
High up grows the magic herb
That will cure thine aching heart."

To which the lover makes reply—

"Tasted I each fragrant herb,
Sipped I of each dewy flower,
Drive thine image from my breast,
Sweetheart, none could have the power."

Having recalled this verse to her memory, Gretchen, somewhat hastily, closed the window. In the combination of the melancholy music and the far-off moonlight she had recognised two elements which possessed the power of developing certain dangerous germs of thought, of whose existence she was conscious. The night air was chill; but it was not the fear of

catching cold which caused the window to be closed so hastily. Moonlight nights are quite as conducive to mental as to bodily indispositions. She was still struggling with the bolt, when all at once a figure became visible outside. It seemed to dip up suddenly and silently out of the darkness, and was close below the window before she had noticed its approach.

Gretchen opened the pane curiously a little way, and looked out.

The figure had come to a halt just below the window, and was standing with upturned face.

"*Mademoiselle, est-cevous?*" asked a woman's voice.

Gretchen recognised the Frenchwoman who was in charge of Princess Tryphosa's child.

A small three-cornered note was handed up to her,—a very heavily scented little note, fragrant as some rich exotic flower. That same perfume seemed always to hang about the Princess herself.

Gretchen opened the note with an uneasy conscience. It contained only a few lines, begging her earnestly and urgently to visit the Princess at once. It gave no motive for the request.

"Is the Princess ill?" asked Gretchen, somewhat startled.

"*Madame est très fatiguée,*" said the maid. Madame had been all day in bed, and had only now made the great effort of putting on her dressing-gown. She hoped that Mademoiselle would be so kind as to come at once.

"Yes, I shall come," said Gretchen. The request was strange, unexpected, and unceremonious, but, despite her alarm, she felt no desire to avoid the meeting. Though nothing further should come of it, it would at least shorten by an hour the long sleepless night which she saw before her. Anything resembling an adventure was welcome

to her overstrained nerves. She slipped noiselessly from her room, and, guided by Fanchette, very soon reached Tryphosa's apartments.

The Princess was sitting when Gretchen entered: she rose very slowly, and saluted the visitor.

The room was Tryphosa's bedroom, and a low lamp burnt on the table. It poured a bright glare on the floor, and illuminated Tryphosa's figure distinctly to the height of her waist. Above that the china shade dimmed the outline of things,—of Tryphosa's face, amongst other things.

Gretchen glanced curiously round her. The room in its fundamental arrangement had not been very different from most European rooms with which she had been acquainted: it had a bed, a press, a sofa, a polished table; but an oriental influence was visible on them all. On the bed there was flung a silken cover, so subtly blended in colour that it told its Eastern tale at the first glance. Between the doors of the half-open press there shone the folds of a Turkish shawl; on the sofa were cushions of oriental embroidery; thick Persian carpets relieved the bareness of the polished floor. The very towels were not at all like the towels which Gretchen had ever seen before: each corner, a delicate intricate of golden and silken threads, would have been treated with tender adoration by any member of any art-needlework society. It is as natural for a Roumanian woman to drag about with her carpets and her embroidered pillows, as it is for an English lady to travel with her patent waterproof and fitted toilet-case.

On the table there lay two soft feather-fans, ruffling and fluttering noiselessly at each breath of air which touched them. Beside the feather-fans, or rather half buried

under them, lay the remains of the mutilated amber rosary; next to it, the last Paul de Kook novel. They lay there as if flung aside as useless,—as if comfort had been sought in both, and found in neither.

"Good evening, mademoiselle," said the Princess, as she rose heavily from her chair. "I am grateful to you for having come, and having come so quick."

It was evident that the rapidity of Gretchen's appearance had much surprised the writer of the note. At all times Gretchen was a puzzle to Tryphosa: her energy, her decision, the ease with which she came to a resolution, and the rapidity with which she acted upon it, were alike strange, bewildering, and tantalising to the slow Roumanian; but this case was especially salient. Considering that it had taken Tryphosa the whole forenoon to mature the idea which had first dawned in her mind yesterday, she sat at the foot of the beech-tree, and that it had taken her the whole afternoon to fabricate the note of summons which was the point and upshot of her meditations, it was a little startling to find that it had taken Gretchen only ten minutes to answer that summons. If Gretchen's thoughts, words, and deeds had progressed at the same rate as did Tryphosa's, her appearance here ought to have taken place about this time to-morrow.

After the first greeting, Tryphosa put out her hand, taking Gretchen's fingers in hers, drew the girl slowly forward until the lamplight was full upon her face.

Gretchen remained passive: the Princess's eyes were fixed on her face, steadily and scrutinisingly,—reading her face, line by line, spelling out the meaning, very slowly but very surely.

Gretchen saw that the Princess

herself was very pale,—that her dead black hair and eyes made her face look unnaturally white. Her eyelids were heavy too, but the rich curve of her lips was brightly red as ever.

After that one long look into Gretchen's face, Tryphosa let go the hand she held, and with a bitter sigh turned aside. Then she sat down, asking Gretchen with a movement to do the same.

It was all very solemn and very mysterious, thought Gretchen; beginning inwardly to wonder why she had been sent for, and when the Princess was going to break the long silence that followed.

The Princess was watching the door, with an evident look of expectancy on her face. Gretchen found herself watching the door too, and wondering with trepidation who or what the Princess was waiting for.

The door opened, and there entered—a tray of *dulcetta*, borne by a servant. Could that have been what the Princess was waiting for? Yes, evidently and obviously. A gradual look of satisfaction suffused Tryphosa's face. She superintended the placing of the dish, and with a whispered direction to the servant, dismissed him from the room.

When the door was closed again, it was evident that the real business of the evening was going to begin. Princess Tryphosa's nation has borrowed many Turkish habits; and no Turk will proceed to business, or pronounce a word upon any subject of importance, until the guest has partaken of refreshment.

Gretchen found herself helped to some sickly sweet stuff, which she detested at the first mouthful.

Tryphosa did not speak until after her spoon had travelled several times up and down between

her lips and the little silver plate. What she said then was sufficiently startling.

"Mademoiselle, we ought to hate each other."

"I hope not," said Gretchen, hastily putting down her plate. She had not allowed herself to make any conjectures as to what Tryphosa's meaning might be in sending for her thus. She had come here with much curiosity, some anxiety, and a little uncertain, undefined hope.

Tryphosa swallowed another mouthful of the *dulcetta*, and said, "You are very beautiful."

She said it merely as if stating a bare fact, not with flattery, and scarcely with bitterness.

"And are you not beautiful yourself?" said Gretchen, flushing; "and is that a reason why we should hate each other?"

"And he thinks so."

It was a continuation of her former phrase upon which the Princess was still engaged.

The flush spread higher on Gretchen's face, but she kept silent.

"I ought to hate you," said the Princess, in her deep, calm voice; "but I liked you at first, and I cannot change so soon."

The thought in Tryphosa's mind, which she intended to express, was, that having begun by liking Gretchen, it would have taken her too long to undo that liking and to mature a dislike in its place.

"If I had known what you were going to do, I should have begun by hating you."

"And what have I done?"

Oh the fixed stare of those great dark eyes! It was hard to bear it unflinchingly. The Princess very deliberately put down her silver plate, and quite as deliberately took up a feather-fan before she spoke.

"You have taken away from

me the man I love; you have robbed me of the love of István Tolnay."

The word was spoken at last, the name was said; their eyes met steadily. They looked at each other, these two women, as only rivals can look,—the one so splendidly dark, the other so gloriously fair; the one like light the other like shade, yet both so beautiful. The black eyes were the deepest, the most intense in the heat of their slow-smouldering fire; but the grey eyes could flash as brightly, and that slight figure could draw itself up with as much proud self-reliance.

"And you sent for me to tell me that?" said Gretchen, in a voice which was hardly quite steady.

This sudden attack, so cruelly plain, so plainly pathetic, seized upon her soul with a fearful strength. It was too little European, too much oriental; there was not enough of regard paid to the polite usages of society, and there was too much of bare, unadorned, purely human feeling. Human feeling in this undisguised state is so seldom to be seen nowadays, smothered as it is in conventional wrappings six-fold thick, that when it is seen out of its wrappings, it startles us disagreeably, as something jarring, something raw—something too strong, too coarsely vigorous, for our tenderly bred nerves.

"Yes, I have sent for you to tell you that mademoiselle."

"Then, Princess, I think I shall go home," said Gretchen, rising.

"I think not," said the Princess.

"And why not, pray?"

Tryphosa's eyes travelled round the room, and came back to Gretchen.

"Because the door is locked."

"I don't believe it," said Gretchen,

and she went to the door and tried it. The handle moved, but the door remained fixed.

She remembered now that word of direction to the door, and a sort of terror came over her. Was she caught in a trap?

She went to the window; it was half closed, and from the hill opposite, where the sun was creeping down, oblique and glorious beams, the sound of wailing *Flügelhorn* still floated dismally on the air.

"I can call for somebody to open the door," she said, turning to Tryphosa. "I think I can call."

"You will not."

The words were very slowly said, very calmly, and yet very decidedly.

They took hold of Gretchen as if they had been living hands. She began to understand the latent strength which existed deep down in this woman's soul—so deep down that a reflection of it rarely reached the surface.

"I shall not let you go," said Tryphosa, in the same subdued voice, "until you have told me what I want to know, and until I have told you what you must know. Let us not argue. I mean to do it, and I am very desperate."

Gretchen felt that what she said was true, and that what she meant to do, she would do. Against her own positive will, she obeyed.

She sat down again impatiently, and, snatching up the second feather-fan from the table, began to fan her face.

"Princess," she said, with a sort of rebellious resignation, "if you have indeed any questions to ask me, please ask them quickly. Though you have me in your power at this moment, you cannot intend to keep me prisoner all night."

As she said it, her eyes fell on the spot from which she had just lifted the fan: there was a tiny dagger lying there, stuck in an enamelled sheath. It was the same which the small Codran was accustomed to wear at his belt. Gretchen had drawn it once when she was playing with the boy, and she knew that the point was of sharp bright steel.

The memory of that bright point grew distinct before her at this moment. Thinking of it in connection with that calm gaze of despair in Tryphosa's eyes, the bright steel point was by no means reassuring.

"I am very desperate," Tryphosa had said, and she had said it so quietly that the words sounded all the more terrible.

Gretchen glanced at that well-shaped hand which held the feather-fan just now: it could hold that little dagger as firmly, no doubt.

She had grown a shade paler, but she did not move from her place: she remained with her eyes fixed on the jewelled knife, too proud to show the alarm which might turn out to be a foolish fear, and yet not quite able to look away from that narrow coloured case where lay hidden from sight that bright point of steel. It was a consoling reflection, at any rate, to think that, even crediting the Princess with so bloodthirsty an intention, the execution was not likely to be rapid. There certainly would be a margin left for defence.

Gretchen had asked the Princess to put her questions quickly, and Tryphosa was honestly anxious to follow the demand; but the very word "quick" sounded like irony when applied to Tryphosa.

"Yes, I am going to tell you quickly," she said, speaking rather

slower than usual. "It is very simple, my question; has István Tolnay told you that he loves you?"

"You have no right to ask me that," cried Gretchen, meeting Tryphosa's gaze. "I refuse to answer your question."

"Has István Tolnay told you that he loves you?"

Gretchen kept silent.

Tryphosa repeated the question a third time, never removing her eyes from Gretchen's face.

Again that something undefined, which she could not explain, and from which she could not escape, took hold of her, and Gretchen answered impatiently—

"Yes, he has."

Not the smallest change became visible in Tryphosa's face: she was quite aware of the answer, but she had put it on one side, as it were, for later consideration, being still busy with something else.

"I have a right to the question, and you shall hear what it is presently."

There was a short silence. In spite of all her fears, Gretchen felt curious. The soft flutter of the fans was the only sound in the room. Tryphosa's fan fluttered slowly, ponderously, in long calm sweeps; Gretchen's fan moved restlessly, quivering in her hand like an imprisoned bird, up and down, in short, feverish strokes, restless and unequal.

They had been silent over a minute, when Tryphosa stopped fanning herself, and clasped her two hands against her breast with a sort of well-pondered vehemence. Her lips were trembling, and her eyebrows drawn together with a painful contraction.

"My God!" she muttered. "He has told her that he loves her. That is my death!"

She paused for a minute, then she raised her eyes again; the heavy lids, heavily fringed, rolled up slowly—a curtain which disclosed a world of beauty below.

"And you? Do you think you will marry him?"

Did she think she would marry him? why, that was the very question which had been Gretchen's torment throughout every weary hour of this weary day; that was the question to which since morning she had vainly sought to find an answer.

"Don't ask me,—oh, I don't know," she answered hurriedly.

"You don't know? then I shall tell you: you *dare* not marry him!"

"And why not?"

At the defiance her pride had risen already, armed to the teeth in its own defence. Under this new phase of danger she forgot even her fear of that sharp steel point.

To her surprise she was reminded of it in the next instant.

For some minutes past Tryphosa had been intently wondering what could be the meaning of the fixed gaze which Gretchen had fastened upon the little dagger on the table. She had reached a satisfactory conclusion now.

"I know what you are afraid of, mademoiselle," she said; "you are afraid of that knife and of my despair. You think I am going to stab you."

This again was very plain—fearfully plain; and Gretchen recoiled, as if the words had been a blow.

The situation was so painfully intense, that nothing but an attempt at lightness could relieve the strain of tension. Gretchen made that attempt.

"I don't think you would succeed," she laughed a little harshly. "It would take you too long to do it."

"Too long! Do No, it is not that. I *will* do a thing, I do it. It may take long, but I do it. It doesn't matter whether a thing is done slowly or quickly—only that it is done. It is not that," the Princess, heavily on the point in question—heavily, unfailingly; "let us not be fools. It is only that it would be no good. He would hate me for having bed the woman he loves—now. If you are of that knife, throw it away."

Gretchen remained scornfully silent; she did not even look towards the knife.

The original question appeared to have become merged into this side-question. Gretchen, therefore, was not a little puzzled when the Princess now repeated—

"Why not? I shall tell you why not."

She had forgotten her own words, but Tryphosa never anything she had once thoroughly understood.

"You dare not marry István Tolnay, because I have a better right to him. You have taken him away from me."

"I have not taken him away; he has taken himself away."

"Will you listen to what I say? I say, I have a better right to him. He saw me before he saw you, and he loved me before he loved you. And that is not all; he promised to marry me long before he knew that you existed."

An exclamation of disbelief broke from Gretchen's lips. She had known of the last year's flirtation between Tryphosa and Tolnay; she had even this year watched its last lingering remnants; but she had never guessed at anything so grave as this, at promises made and not held. The thing was too monstrous to be grasped. Was this

not only the invention of a jealous woman?

"Listen; this is not yet all. I have more rights than this. I have given up everything for him." The Princess sat up on the sofa now, and the hand which held the feather-fan trembled. "I have waited patiently for years for him. I have allowed my name to be talked of lightly for his sake. I have made my child fatherless. I have sacrificed"—there was a momentary pause, which seemed to promise a climax—"I have sacrificed my journey to Paris this year—and all for him."

There was a touch of absurdity, after all, in the midst of the pathos. But to a Roumanian there was nothing ludicrous about it. To sacrifice a Parisian journey is to sacrifice something sacred, something inestimably precious; for to Roumanian women the word "Paris" is as sweet as the word "paradise"—perhaps, if the truth were known, sweeter.

"I have made my child fatherless;"—those were the words which struck Gretchen's ear. She heard no others, and she stared with horror at the Princess, and from the Princess to the jewelled sheath on the table.

"What?" she stammered, trembling; "you have—you have"—she could not finish her own extravagant thought. She recovered herself, and asked, "When did your husband die?"

A slow stare was the answer.

"My husband die? He is not dead."

"Not dead?" Gretchen got to her feet shivering. "Princess Tryphosa, are you not a widow?"

"He is not dead, he is alive. He lives in Bucharest. We are separated; but I see him often. We are very good friends."

Gretchen stood aghast, feeling as

if she had been suddenly plunged into ice-cold water, which had cut her breath short for a moment. Was it her sense of hearing or her sense of understanding which was at fault? Did she hear aright? Of course she heard aright; it was only her ignorance which was to blame. She had not mastered the A B C of the strange Roumanian nation. Tryphosa's words were a shock to her own stern principles; but, in point of fact, the Princess was rather behindhand in this matter. Most Roumanian women of her age have two husbands alive at a time; and any lady who contents herself with conjugal affection is looked upon as eccentric, unfashionable, not to say dowdy. It is nothing at all unusual in a Bucharest *salon* to see a lady enter on the arm of her third husband, smilingly return the courteous bows of her two first lords, and in the course of the evening perhaps begin to throw languishing glances toward the one destined to become her fourth.

Tryphosa, seeing Gretchen's too evident distress, good-naturedly explained—

"I married very young; not because I wanted but because they all wanted it, and really it was not worth while fighting about it. I could have got separated any day I liked, for in our country it is made easy for us women; but I should not have taken the trouble, only—I met István Tolnay. I saw him one year, and I loved him the next year; I shall be forced to love him all my life."

She spoke in a tone of conviction; and, no doubt, she spoke truly. Tryphosa would never find time for more than one passion in a lifetime.

It was a hard moment for Gretchen. Two feelings fought within her—disgust and pity.

She was horrified at Tryphosa's confession; she was touched by her boundless love.

"What is it you want of me?" she asked in a whisper.

The Princess reflected deeply. "Justice," she said at last.

"I do not understand you."

"He has sworn that he will marry me. He has not sworn it once, but twenty times. Do you not see that I am ruined if he does not hold to what he has sworn?"

"If he has sworn it, he will keep it, of course. What is the use of addressing me?"

The Princess only shook her head, "What I ask of you is, that you should promise not to marry him."

"I will not bind myself by any promise," said Gretchen, between pride and perplexity. "Let me go now, Princess—I have listened long enough."

"You must listen to me longer," said the Princess. "You cannot do me this injustice: you love justice, and you love truth."

"But *is* this truth!" thought Gretchen, in an agony of doubt.

Had Tryphosa modified the crudeness of her story, Gretchen might have been convinced; but when thus presented to her in all its hideousness of broken promises and heartless desertion, the inexperienced girl, shocked and disgusted, shrank back, taking refuge in disbelief. However much she might have sighed for liberty a few hours since, her pride revolted against having the gift forced on her by another woman. Doubts were obscuring her mind. To reject Tryphosa's demand, or to throw over István Tolnay after having played thus fast and loose with him,—of the two which would be the greater sin?

Every trifle grew fearfully weighty at this moment. Her

mother's words, Kurt's debts rose up and confronted her.

"It would be no good my promising," she said at last; that would not give you back his love."

"It would be some good;" and the Princess frowned as if in heavy thought. "He loves you now, but he would come back to me in time. I know it; he cannot be true to any woman for long."

"You say that and yet you love him?"

"I do not think he is a good man,—I think he is bad; and yet I love him—madly."

There was a fearful suggestion of suppressed strength in that one word.

"I would sacrifice everything in the world for the sake of my child, but I would sacrifice my child for the sake of him. Do you believe now that I love him?"

There was no answer possible—none that would not have sounded weak after those slow, burning words. The revelation of passion beneath this sluggish surface was overwhelming; it stunned Gretchen for a moment.

"Will you give me the promise now?"

"Oh, I don't know—I don't know!" cried Gretchen, flinging her hands over her face. "Let me think."

"As long as you like."

How strange the deliberate words sounded after the last that had been said! The request appeared perfectly natural to Tryphosa: she was accustomed to think so much and so slowly herself, that it was not surprising to hear Gretchen say, "Let me think."

She took up her fan again. Her features were heavily passive, but the fingers which closed over the handle clutched it convulsively.

She would wait like that for an hour with perfect patience.

Gretchen felt it; she would wait like that the whole night immovably. Princess Tryphosa's patience filled her with a blank hopelessness. It was strange that, after all her agonies of to-day, she should not grasp at the promise as a heaven-sent means of escape; and yet it was not so very strange either, for the mystery of a woman's heart is the only labyrinth to which no clue has been invented, nor ever will be found. Gretchen had much obstinacy, and she felt she would do a great deal rather than be forced into a promise; but her obstinacy beside that of the Princess was like the resistance of a prickly hedge beside that of a wall of granite blocks. One of the two must break the silence, and she knew that Princess Tryphosa would not do so.

Gretchen removed her hands and made one more attempt.

"It is no use asking me to promise," she said. "If it is true that Baron Tolnay has sworn that he will marry you, then why do you not appeal straight to him?"

"Do you think that I have not appealed to him?" said Tryphosa, with a sort of bitter frankness. "I sent him word that he was to come to me to-day, and he has not come. I asked for five minutes' interview; he has taken no notice. I begged for one sign from him; he has given me none. That is the way he spurns me now."

The words might have sounded like abject humility, but for the sullen pride with which the admission was made.

Gretchen stood uncertain, wondering how it was to end. She felt that Tryphosa was reading her face again, with that searching look. The fan had stopped moving; a new thought was dawning in Tryphosa's mind. After a little it reached the surface. Gret-

chen saw the light in her eyes before she was surprised by the unexpected question.

"Tell me this: do you *love* István Tolnay?"

The fixed stare was hard to stand, but Gretchen would not drop her eyes. She gazed back steadily, though she felt the colour ebbing from her cheek. That question at least she had a right not to answer: she stood and stared back at her questioner.

Tryphosa raised the fan to her lips, and with her teeth slowly dragged out one of the scarlet feathers of the edge. It was the only sign she gave of the suspense which was devouring her; but it told more than sighs and tears could have told. The way in which it was done made Gretchen shudder, and look back from the Princess to the enamelled sheath on the table. Yes, that woman was quite capable of a heroic crime.

"I see," said the Princess, after a long pause—"I see; of course you love him. It could not be otherwise."

A sudden revulsion of feeling came over Gretchen; every pulse throbbed tumultuously—she seemed to lose sight and hearing.

"No, I do not love him!" she cried passionately, thrown off her guard for the moment. "I do not love Baron Tolnay. I swear that he is nothing to me!" And then the mist seemed to clear from her eyes, and she saw Tryphosa bending forward, with the red feather still held bitten between her teeth.

There was no triumph in her eyes: wide-open and dull, they were fixed full on Gretchen's face. It was impossible to read whether displeasure or satisfaction lay underneath that dull surface. Perhaps she was enraged, perhaps she felt victorious; but there was nothing in her eyes as yet. She

unclosed her teeth and slowly released the scarlet feather. It fluttered softly to the ground, and lay there on the carpet at her feet, a vivid drop of warm heart's-blood shed by some cruel hand.

CHAPTER XXXII.—ISTVÁN'S STIRRUP-CUP.

"Not to be wearied, not to be deterred,
Not to be overcome."

—SOUTHEY.

The autumn morning was slowly dawning into day, chill, and scarcely light enough to show clearly the horns, and skins, and other sportsmanlike trophies which decorated the room where István Tolnay was taking a hasty breakfast.

Outside the air was raw; the light morning mist still hovered over the valley, rolling slowly down the hillside, to leave every moment a new breath of glistening forest and sharp-cut rock distinct in the cold air. It was one of those cautious mornings which hold out no promises, and which yet are more to be relied on than many a red-cheeked dawn that jumps out of bed in a hurry and wakes all the world with sunshiny smiles, but who finds before long that he has overtaxed his spirits, and generally ends by going into a fit of sulks or breaking into a storm of ill-tempered tears.

István Tolnay, as he took his breakfast, in which red wine appeared to be the principal feature, threw more than one glance out of the window, and decided that it was just the right sort of day for their expedition.

The room bore the stamp of wealth, of luxury even, in every detail. It spoke of the owner's taste. Besides the trophies on the walls, there was a bear-skin on the ground; there were guns and whips, and a perfectly bewildering amount of smoking appliances. Also there was an extensive collection of

photographs, exclusively female, which, from the details of their attire—sometimes the scantiness of such details—were unmistakably theatrical. They were but dimly seen in this dawning light; and the figure of István himself was still veiled in the departing shadow. He wore a costume which, by the inhabitants of the place, was considered to be sportsmanlike, and which, by Mr Howard, had long ago been condemned as "coxcomby" and bad form. However that might be, the grey-and-green suit and feathered hat were most particularly becoming to the style of this young Hungarian's looks. Upon everybody else the yellow gaiters would have looked *outré*; but István wore them in such a way that it was impossible to look at the calves of his legs with entire disapproval.

Although he was eating his breakfast with as good an appetite as usual, and although the red wine was in no danger of being neglected, István was doing something most unusual with him—he was thinking.

Two days ago he had confessed his love to Gretchen; and her sudden withdrawal and persistent avoidance of him during the homeward walk considerably puzzled him, although it can hardly be said to have seriously alarmed him. This coyness and half-repelling reluctance was but fuel thrown on a fire, which already burnt high: a little touch of difficulty gave a

new charm to the wooing of this German girl. It suited his imaginative temperament—it was a change and a relief from his relations which Tryphosa; for if difficulty spurred István, too great ease made him relax. It is probable that the dreadful earnestness of the love which Tryphosa offered him had been the reason of his so rapidly cooling towards her. It oppressed him to be loved in that tragically serious manner. Of course he liked to be loved by a woman; but, the climax once passed, he preferred to treat the matter somewhat more lightly, and, above all, somewhat more expeditiously.

For one moment in the cave István's self-confidence had tottered. The figure of the short-sighted lawyer had seemed to obscure his path; but it had only been for one moment. His nature was elastic, and his vanity wellnigh invincible. A very little reflection had told him that the idea of that man being his rival was no more than an amusing thought, to be laughed at and dismissed. Just put his personal advantages opposite to those of Dr Komers, and what woman could hesitate? Let alone worldly advantages, István, to do him justice, thought a great deal more of the personal than of the worldly advantages. He had been so used to riches all his life, that he set no store by them. If he had set more store by them, he surely would have hesitated a little longer before abandoning the fabulously rich Roumanian princess for the sake of a penniless German girl. His passion of the moment had the same effect as the light of a brightly burning lamp—it made everything very distinct all around it, as far as the rays fall, and very dark all beyond. It is only that

circle of light which exists for the moment, as long as the wick has food enough to burn.

He had begun by paying attention to Gretchen, because he was struck by her beauty, because it was agreeable and amusing to pay her attention, and because he had no principles which forbade him to do an agreeable and amusing thing, even if thereby he was breaking his faith towards another woman. She had piqued him by the force of contrast. She was different in disposition, in colouring, in everything, from the woman he was accustomed to meet; different, in particular, from the last woman he had loved. There could be no sharper contrast than Tryphosa and Gretchen; and if he had never known Tryphosa, István might never have loved Gretchen so hotly as he loved her now. But it was not merely with other women that she contrasted; she embodied a contrast in herself. This girl, who looked like an Ophelia and talked like a philosopher, who moved like an Undine and argued like a logician, had from the first moment caught his fancy. The harmonious discord which she presented was just of the sort to rouse István's interest. The very first words she had ever addressed to him had surprised him almost as much as though a rosebud had opened its petals to remark that two and two make four, and that therefore it stood to reason that the half of four was two.

István had begun, therefore, to pay attention to Gretchen because it was pleasant, and he had gone on because it became more pleasant.

Very likely it was only quite lately that he had reached the point of confessing to himself that his promises to Tryphosa were to count as nothing. There was no struggle to fight through, no agonies

of indecision, before the wrong could triumph over the right. Nothing of the sort. Those promises were torn up by the root as easily as a plant is torn up out of the sand. It was a puzzling phenomenon, but it was true. Gretchen had once wondered what element there was missing in István's nature, the want of which made him different from other men. One element certainly had been left out in his composition, but Gretchen had not yet found it out by name. His was a face which no line of care could ever mark, which no trouble could ever alter; his fancy it was which was hot, and his heart which was cold—not so much cold as light, and capricious in its lightness.

But though he had arrived at confessing to himself that his promises were to count as nothing, he had meant that Tryphosa was not quite yet to know this truth. Not that he had taken any precautions against her knowing it—it was not in him to do so. It was an impossibility to him, physical and moral, to look ahead of the present moment. Neither had he made any effort to see Gretchen in the course of yesterday, so as to get the final answer from her lips. He preferred that the opportunity should come naturally, and he knew that it must come naturally to-day.

Bad weather would have crossed his plans; but the long-looked-for or long-dreaded rain was not in the sky to-day: it was cloudless and of a keen blue, and the mists were rolling lower every instant. The whiff of air that came in by the window brought joy and hope on its wings; it quickened his pulses and braced his nerves. István Tolnay felt very sanguine.

"One more glass of wine," he said aloud. "Let this be my stirrup-cup; and then, Excelsior!"

He took up the bottle as he spoke: the red wine gurgled through the throat of olive-green glass. He raised the full glass to his lips, but in the same moment he turned his head, for the door-handle was slowly moving. Slowly, very slowly, the door glided open.

István muttered something between his teeth, and put down the untouched glass so sharply that some drops of red wine splashed over the edge—for Princess Tryphosa was standing before him.

It was Princess Tryphosa: but it was not the glowing sultana, whose beauty but a few weeks ago had still held the power of reviving for a moment the embers of a dead love; neither was it the sobbing woman who had wept at the foot of the beech-tree, nor the calmly desperate woman who had sat opposite to Gretchen last night with the dagger-point between them. Her misery had reached another stage. She was dry-eyed and haggard; she was colourless and worn in face. Her hair was rough, and her dress was crushed and unsightly. She had aged ten years in a few hours. Her eyes had not closed for a moment. All night she had sat, and pondered, and reflected, feeling about carefully for some way out of the straits of her despair. Gretchen had said, "Why do you not appeal to him straight?" and those words had remained fastened in her mind. Of course she had appealed to him already; but for weeks past she had kept silent. One last and desperate appeal might yet save her. She was not a woman to leave any stone, however heavy, unturned. The curious mixture of laziness and energy, of languor and passion, which were the elements of her nature, gave her a strength of purpose which, at first sight, was not to be suspected. By

morning she had matured, not only her plan, but also the details. She had resolved that she should not go alone—that she should take her child with her. Her love for her child was very genuine of its kind; but it was not maternal affection which was the cause of the little Codran having been roused out of his sleep at daybreak, and dragged up out of his soft cushions. Instinct told her that that small curly head would play a useful part in the scene which she was deliberately going to provoke. Never had she been so sincerely grateful to Providence for having given her a pretty boy for her son as to-day, when she believed that his pretty looks might help her to touch István Tolnay's heart, or rather to fire his fancy. In a sort of dim and far-off way she felt aware that she was not beautiful to-day, and some impulse moved her to put her son's beauty in place of her own. Here, again, it was her knowledge of the man which guided her.

Her appearance came in such harsh contrast to his thoughts of a minute ago, that István for a moment seemed to have lost the power of speech. He started at the white-faced woman, and the sleepy child which clung to her hand, as if he did not know them. But long before Tryphosa had succeeded in speaking, he had recovered himself.

"Princess! You here! Is it possible?"

The Princess shut the door as slowly as she had opened it, and came forwards towards him.

"What impudence! The servants might have seen you!"

The Princess stood still, with her child drawn to her side, and looked back at him, still searching for words, and struggling for expression of what she felt and wanted to show. She would have preferred to give some sign more

passionate and moving; but she had grown so used to slowness, that even at a moment as critical as was this one, she was unable to move or to speak quickly. It was too unaccustomed and too strange.

"The servants *have* seen me," she said at last. "Do you think I would stop at that?"

István understood now that she was desperate; and as for the rest, he did not much care. His conduct had never been shaped to please public opinion, and if Tryphosa could brave the world, so could he.

Prudence was a cloak which sat ill upon him, and Tryphosa saw how ill it sat.

"You were not usually so prudent, István, when you used to climb to my window in order to get a smile, and when you used to pick up the flowers I dropped, under my husband's eyes. Do you remember that time?"

"Excuse my surprise," said István, with convenient evasion, and still feigning a stupefaction which he had already ceased to feel. "but you never leave the house so early as this."

"And when you used to carry my hair in a locket," she went on, with that despairing tenacity of hers. "There is other hair in the locket now, I suppose?"

"Nonsense, Tryphosa! there is not."

"And you used not to go to mountains at that time, or, if you went, it was with your gun and your dog alone."

"My gun and my dog have been to the mountains often enough this summer," he said, sullenly. "I am not a man to be tied to apron-strings."

"You are going to the mountains again; you are going to-day—now. I see it by your dress, and I knew it before; that is why I came so early."

"I am going for a walk."

"You are going to the mountains, and Mademoiselle Mohr is going also."

"She may be—I don't know."

Another long stare from her eyes, before her lips said doggedly—

"She *is*, and you *do* know."

He turned with an oath upon his lips.

"Cursed be your obstinacy! Have it then, since you will: she is going, and I do know it."

"I thought so," said Tryphosa, calmly. "And what do you mean to do about me?"

"Mean? I don't mean anything. I don't know what I mean, and I can't tell you. It is stronger than I am, do you hear? It is no good speaking to me at all."

"You mean to break your promises."

The words, plainly spoken, were ugly even to István's ears: he turned, and taking up his soft hat, began crushing it up between his hands.

The small Codran, finding his mother's conversation and movements excessively wearisome, had wandered off towards the corner, and after affectionately pulling handfuls of hair out of the rugged bear-skin, had fallen asleep upon it. His mother, going towards him, dragged him up and drew him to her side. If she had had more leisure, she would certainly have felt pity for the small victim; but at this moment he was to her no more than a piece of decoration necessary for the scene.

"Have you never thought, Baron Tolnay, that I am not a woman to let myself be abandoned in this way?" she asked.

"Don't threaten me, Tryphosa!" and she saw a gleam in his eye—"don't threaten me; if you are desperate, so am I."

"Look at my child; I made a fatherless—for your sake."

"I never asked you to do it," he said, speaking wildly. It was a brutal thing to say, after all that had passed between them. Even he could not have said it, had he not been half out of his senses at the moment. He certainly could not have said it if she had looked at this moment as she had looked that evening when he had taken the pomegranate flower from her hair. She had been beautiful then; she was scarcely so now. The voluptuous glow of colouring about her seemed faded. She was a woman who imperiously demanded warm-tinted, luxurious surroundings. This cold morning light did not suit her; the sharp air seemed to chill her; her face looked old and hard; her very eyes were sunken. She was like any other of her countrywomen who has just missed being beautiful. Moreover, she was unwittingly pursuing the very course which with Tolnay was most fatal; she was pressing him to a distinct answer, and this pressure made him furious.

"You did ask me to do it on your knees. István, shall I kneel to you now?"

"Let me go—let me go!" cried István, tearing away his arm from the grasp of her clinging hand.

"Yes, I shall let you go. I am not strong enough to hold you with my hands; but rid of me you shall never be. Oh, István! you should not have loved me—you should have loved some woman whose heart is as light as your own. István, listen to me: by all the sacrifices which I have made, by my love to my son, by the memory of your love to me—I conjure you, listen to me!"

"Enough, enough!" cried István, turning from her—for the

gaze of those stupid passionate eyes was oppressive even to him,—“enough, Tryphosa; it is late, and I must go.”

“You must go—to her. To tell her that you love her.”

“I am accountable to none for what I may say or do.”

You have told her already that you love her.”

“Think what you like.”

“And I could tell you another thing.”

“Could you? Ha! what is that?”

She had come a step nearer, mechanically dragging her sleepy child beside her. Now she stopped, and eyed him attentively.

“Do you think that she loves you?”

“I shall hear to-day;” and a smile of confidence flickered across his features.

“I can tell you.”

“Ah!” He faced her, and in his eyes there was nothing now but an expectant light. The hatred, the anger, the reckless cruelty were all held at bay for one moment by breathless suspense. He might almost have been mistaken, as he stood there, for an honest and true-hearted lover, so little power had his passions of stamping their mark on his face. And yet at this moment it was that his cruelty reached the point of climax. That expectant light in his eyes meant death to Tryphosa—a more bitter death than his fury of a minute ago. He viewed her only as the person who could give him information he wanted, and as such only he looked at her with interest.

The answer was long in coming, but it came at last.

“I will tell you, then: she does not love you.”

The words were dropped slowly, heavily, as if each word had been a leaden weight falling to the ground.

The light died out of István's

eyes, only to blaze up again more hotly.

“You lie! She does love me. I know it—it must be.”

He might as well have run his head against a rock. Tryphosa answered immovably as before—

“She does not love you.”

This time he turned livid pale. He knew Tryphosa too well to doubt her plain statement. He stood speechless, his hands slowly clenching by his sides, and a rush of tumultuous thought coursing fast and furious through his brain. Tryphosa watched him: she had tried an experiment, and she was watching to see how it would work.

Suddenly upon the paleness came a painfully vivid flush of red; he sprang forward towards her and caught her by the wrist.

“Is this your revenge?” he demanded violently. “Is this to torture me? Is it your jealousy that makes you speak? or madness? or is it the truth? Which is it? I must know it now—at once.”

She did not shrink or waver as he touched her. There was the truth written plainly in her eyes, though she made no movement with her lips; and István saw it. He dropped her hand and turned away, taking two steps in the room and back again, with a new and sudden restlessness of manner.

“How do you know this? Quick, quick, quick!”

Quickness was out of her power, but she answered his question clearly enough.

“She told me so herself: she was with me last night. I asked her, and she told me.”

“Ha, ha!—impossible!” he laughed harshly. “She told you that,—and what else?”

“She told me that,” said the Princess, slowly, “and she told me nothing else.”

"You have something more to say—say it at once."

"She told me nothing else, but I have guessed."

"Oh, speak!"—he stamped with his foot on the ground.

"I think that she loves some one else."

István's teeth clenched, and he muttered a brutal curse.

"I am certain of it; she loves some one else, and he is a better man than you."

"Do not speak his name!" cried Tolnay, with sudden vehemence and a look of hatred almost diabolical in its malice. That first dawn of doubt which had risen the other day in the cave had prepared the way for this. That misgiving came to life again, and this time full-grown and near; not a mere dim, far-off possibility, which he had laughed at and scorned. The complacent self-confidence of half an hour ago made this fall from the height the more rude; the joyous hopefulness which had buoyed him up made this mortification the more tolerable. When that thought had first presented itself for consideration, he had dismissed it easily, for he had nothing but his own passing impression to go by, and vanity had argued eloquently against it; now this same thought was supported by Tryphosa's judgment; and Tryphosa's conclusions were arrived at slowly, but unfailingly.

"Do not speak his name!" he had cried—"I will not hear it; the thought is maddening. I hated that man from the first day. I will—yes, I will."

His voice was so loud that the terrified Cordan set up a howl of distress; but the angry tone broke off suddenly, and István paced the room with his hands clasped behind him, and his eyes fixed on the ground. He stopped by the table,

and lifting the glass to his lips, drank off the wine, then put down the empty glass with such vehemence that the thin stem was shattered, and the upper half rolled broken to the ground.

Codran stopped crying, and detaching himself from his mother's hand, proceeded to make himself happy on the floor with the broken glass and the few drops of wine which still lingered about it.

István took up his hat and stick abstractedly, as if he had forgotten that he was not alone in the room.

He would not have looked at Tryphosa again, if she had not stopped him as he was passing her on his way to the door.

"Where are you going to, István?"

"To the mountains," he said, with a hard smile.

"To the mountains," she repeated. Then, after a momentary pause, "What will you do there?"

"Something; ah yes, I will certainly do something. Never fear!"

"To the mountains. And what is to become of me!"

"I don't know."

He raised his eyes from the ground for a moment. There was a curious look in them. Tryphosa thought that she knew every glance and expression of his by heart, but there was something in his face now which was new even to her. She began slowly to understand that her experiment had been a failure.

"We shall talk of that when I come back. There will be a great deal to talk about."

"You don't know—no, and you don't care."

"Perhaps not," he said, shaking her off.

Her arm remained poised, just where he had shaken it from him. Her face was white, but something was slowly kindling in her eyes.

There was a spark lit beneath, and very gradually it broke to the surface ; it reached it, and her black eyes flamed.

"You villain!" she panted. "You abandon me—you villain!" and she struck out her closed hand towards him.

The motion would have been a blow had it not come so slowly that István could step back in time. The scorn in her eyes was so supreme that it had the power to arrest him for a moment. She was not beautiful, perhaps, but she was wellnigh sublime in this burst of outraged pride, which, coming so late, had yet come so superbly. She had the blood of ancient Rome in her veins, and it had at last caught fire. The passion of another woman would have spent its strength long before this climax was reached ; but Tryphosa's strength was all latent, dormant, difficult to be roused, but fearful when once awoke.

For the first time in his life István quailed before a woman.

But not for long. Her hand was still outstretched, her lips were still quivering with the energy of her last words, when already that one moment of stupefaction was past, and his thoughts plunged back into the current which was dragging them on. Her very presence, so real for a moment, became again distant and indistinct.

"We shall talk when I come back,—there will be much to tell;" and crushing his hat on to his head, he rushed out of the room,

leaving Tryphosa standing where she was.

As long as his steps could be heard, she remained fixed and listening, the light of scorn still in her eyes, the very anger seeming to have turned to stone in her face. Then, when the last step had died off, and all had been quiet for some moments, her hand slowly fell, and the rigid harshness of her face began to melt. She sank down on the seat beside her, and she wept. Those tears were for the man whom she had called "villain," whom she would have struck but a minute ago, and whom yet she loved better than all the good men in the world.

Little Codran, hearing the deep-drawn sobs, trotted to his mother's side, pulled down her hands, and held the broken glass to her lips.

"Are you tired, mamma?" he said ; "drink this little red drop—I left it for you : it is very sweet."

It was the glass from which István Tolnay had drunk, and, taking it from Codran's hand, Tryphosa dashed it to the ground. Then drawing the child on to her breast, she gave him a kiss, so fierce that it seemed to scorch the freshness of his innocent cheek.

"Can I go back to bed, mamma?" asked Codran, yawning. "I am so sleepy."

Yes, he might go back to bed : the scene was played out, the curtain dropped ; and the poor little piece of decoration, which had failed to decorate sufficiently, might be packed away again out of sight.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—THE FALLEN SIGN-POST.

"O, der arme Mensch steht immer mit zugebundenen Augen vor deinem Schwerte, unbegreifliches Schicksal!"—JEAN PAUL.

This autumn season is bringing While below in the valley life
strange contrasts in its train. and activity are slowly sinking

to sleep, up on the mountains a blaze of departing splendour is bursting into glory. For weeks past Nature has been quietly at work laying in the ground-tints, and painting in one touch of bright colour after the other; but it is now only that the picture is completed, and stands forth for a brief time of perfection, for soon the winter will begin to undo the summer's work.

The Hercules valley is dazzling in winter, fairy-like in spring, majestic in summer; but autumn remains its season of beauty: and this autumn is a singularly dry autumn, with no rains to rot the leaves, nothing but sunshine to wither them brilliantly. A wildfire seems to have flown over the hill-side, and touched each maple-tree, till it flames like a burning brand; the low masses of bilberry-bushes, clustering between the rocks, begin to warm into colour, glowing hot as embers. The rocks themselves, even the sober grey rocks, do not disdain to decorate themselves, and wear patches of gaudy mosses in honour of the departing summer. What had been bright before becomes brilliant now — what had been brilliant now reaches magnificence. Green turns into rich brown, and brown changes to molten gold.

But it is in the world above that the splendour is thrown about most recklessly. Here magnificence has run riot. There is on all sides a waste of richness which almost over-surfeits the eye. Every coloured lichen on the tree-stems, which in summer were delicate and small, has become magnified to double its size; every tuft of moss on the rotting carcass of a fallen trunk has deepened its pile and intensified its colour.

The dead trees are making preparations for their winter funeral;

the monarchs of the forest are lying in state, swathed in velvet, crowned with gold, and decked out with a brilliancy of ornament well worthy of a departed king. Bright fungi are the most gorgeous among these ornaments. These mysterious and capricious children of the forest have started up in thousands immediately after the first autumn showers, and have continued to increase ever since, fed by the fatness of the soil, though no more rain has fallen. Piles of fungi, scarlet, blue, orange, and purple, have grown out of the bark of the trees, or stand in clusters covering the forest-floor, each cluster like a handful of jewels which have been scattered broadcast. There are monster pearls on the branches overhead, and giant coral reared on all sides; glistening sprays, delicately cut and fancifully ramified, decorate the pathway.

It is difficult to believe that these gems are nothing but toadstools; it is still more difficult to believe that these same toadstools form an important article of diet in a Roumanian peasant-household. The forests thus hold an inexhaustible fund of *maigre* dishes. Moreover, there seems to be a sort of mutual understanding between Nature and the Greek Church. They have accommodated each other. Nature is kind enough to treasure up these stores for the time of fast; or perhaps the Greek Church has invented these fasts for the purpose of consuming the unlimited stores which the forests hold.

"They string them upon cords and hang them up to dry," said the Bohemian, somewhat contemptuously, as he pointed out a clump of fungi, in shape and colour closely resembling a pile of ripe apriots; "or else they keep them in vinegar until they want them, and then

devour them pickled. But they will not be quite as well off this year as they usually are: this is all nothing to the number I have sometimes seen in damp autumns,—they become a positive nuisance then; you can scarcely step free of them.”

Up here, in the depth of the forest, the store of *maigre* dishes ran no danger of being disturbed. Here the fungi would live their brief time of magnificence, and then drop back silently into the eternal decay of nature, without having been either strung upon cords or preserved in vinegar for the fast-time.

“Don’t you eat toadstools in Bohemia?” inquired Kurt.

“Of course we eat toadstools in Bohemia,” said the Bohemian, with a pitying smile; “but we don’t eat the blue and the red ones—we only eat the yellow ones and the white ones.”

Mr Howard here begged to explain that he utterly condemned not only blue and red, but also yellow and white toadstools; and that no power on earth could succeed in making him touch anything but an orthodox mushroom, with no suspicion of a doubt upon its character, and cooked in an orthodox English fashion.

Gretchen took no part in the discussion: she was wondering within her mind whether happiness were indeed compatible with a hut and smoked toadstools.

They had been walking for some hours now, and, contrary to her wont, she was tired. The scene with *Tryphosa* had excited her; her sleep had been broken and feverish: not even the autumn brilliancy around her could dispel the listless languor which weighed on her to-day. Ever since the moment of departure she had instinctively kept to her brother’s

side, and had until now succeeded in avoiding anything but the most general and trivial conversation. She was so absorbed in her own anxieties, that it was some time before she noticed the remarkable change which had come over Tolnay’s manner. He was excited and flushed—talked loud at moments, and then subsided into moody silence. He seldom addressed her, and made no attempt to draw her away from the others. But whenever she happened to turn, she found his eyes fixed upon her; and once when Dr Komers was helping her over a tree-trunk, she had been startled by a glitter in István’s eyes, and that same look of furious hatred which she had seen two days ago in the cave. Tolnay was not looking at her at the moment he was looking at the lawyer; and instinctively Gretchen dropped the hand which Vincenz had stretched towards her, and scrambled over the tree-trunk unaided.

They rested at intervals, and walked on as they felt inclined. The whole day was spent in the forests thus, and it was sunset when they emerged from under the trees on to a free space of meadow.

“We have been here before,” said Gretchen; “this is the meadow on which we rested the very first time I walked in the mountains.”

“When I was your guide,” said Tolnay beside her. “I was to have shown you *Gaura Dracului* that day; don’t you remember?”

It was the same meadow, but dressed in a different garment. Brilliantly green it had been before, but here, too, autumn had been busy, and with cunning alchemy had changed the emerald into an amethyst. Crocus-heads stood closed together, so thickly sown that every step crushed half-a-dozen of the full-blown flowers.]

"Shall I tell you what I am thinking of?" asked Tolnay, abruptly, as they walked over the crocuses.

"As you like," said Gretchen, carelessly, not choosing to betray her trepidation.

"I am wishing that I had lived in the days of romance."

His tone was so peculiar that Gretchen looked up in alarm.

"Well," he said, with a harsh laugh, "what are you afraid of? We are all so quiet and sensible, you know, in this age of reason."

"Fräulein," said the Bohemian, hurrying to her side, "there is no need for our crossing this meadow; it is time to be hurrying homewards: look, the darkness is near."

Gretchen stopped and turned, glad of an interruption. She looked upwards at the sky: the few clouds which floated there were tinged on their lower edge with the glow of rosy sunset. She looked downwards, and saw that already the shadows were growing deep under the trees. She was half inclined to turn. If the Bohemian had not spoken again, she certainly would have turned; but a little too much anxiety is apt to spoil the very object we have at heart, and on this occasion the Bohemian betrayed in his manner a little too much anxiety.

Had he only kept silent while Gretchen was hesitating, all would have been well, but the Fates pushed him to speak.

"Let us turn, Fräulein, and go homewards," he urged with growing eagerness; "there is nothing to be seen over there."

Gretchen looked from the sky to his face, glanced at it, and then looked again with a faintly awakened curiosity. The anxiety in those clear eyes was very apparent. It was evident that he did not wish them to cross this meadow. The

consciousness of this fact enough to double the desire Gretchen felt for crossing it.

"It is of robbers you are afraid?" she said; "I think we might risk them. There will be moonlight on the hills to-night to light us on the way home."

"I am not afraid of robbers, Fräulein."

"You cannot suppose that the weather will break: look at the sky,—it seems as if it never could rain again."

"I am not afraid of the weather breaking, Fräulein."

"Is there a spring beyond this meadow?"

There was a spring in that direction, the Bohemian reluctantly admitted, but it was some distance off,—a nearer one had run dry.

"Let us go on then," said Gretchen; "I am longing for the taste of fresh water."

He was silent after this, and led the way slowly over the crocus meadow, but there was a troubled look disturbing the usual peaceful melancholy of his face, which Gretchen did not fail to notice.

They entered the shadow of the forest, Gretchen taking care to keep by her brother's side. Baron Tolnay was in advance, and Dr Komers a little way behind them; Mr Howard still further to the rear.

This was the same spot they had been on once before, on the occasion of their first walk in the mountains, but they had never passed here since. It was a part of the forest little known, and even less trodden by human feet than the rest of the woods around. It did not lie in the usual beat of either hunter or woodcutter.

The aspect of the spot had so changed with the change of the season, that it woke no special

memory in Gretchen's mind, until after a few more steps they came in sight of a huge beech-tree stretched upon the ground.

She knew that tree: it was the same on which the goat-herds had sat, and on the leaves of which the goats had fed.

There were no goat-herds here now, and no tinkling goat-bell. There was silence and desolation all around the spot. The leaves had been fresh then, and the trunk newly hewn; now the green leaves had turned brown: they strewed the ground, or hung rustling on the dead branches. Over the marks of the axe-strokes the mosses had begun to creep, hiding the unsightly wounds with their green and yellow velvet. Then the felled giant had been still half alive—the sap had scarce had time to stand still in its course; but now it was a mere corpse, a useless heap of wood on which decay is rapidly seizing. It would be more gorgeous next autumn than it could be this autumn, for the moss and the lichens take many months to cover up a dead tree,—but it was well adorned even now. There was a colony of tiny fungi drawing a broad yellow streak down half its length, and single patches of colour had begun to collect.

The Bohemian came to a standstill beside the tree-trunk, and put down the bundle which he carried over his shoulder, and which was tied with a piece of strong rope.

"If you will sit down here, Fräulein, I will fetch you the water; it will take me a little time."

"Very well," said Gretchen; "we can wait here. Shall you be long away?"

"Fifteen minutes, perhaps, not more."

"Thank you very much," said Gretchen, sitting down on the trunk

and handing him her flask. "I am sorry you have to go so far."

The Bohemian took the flask, and looked at Gretchen for a moment as if he had something more to say. He turned away, however, and walked a few steps off, then returned abruptly and said, "You will wait here, Fräulein, will you not?"

"Of course we shall wait here."

"But, I mean, you will not move from the spot; You might lose your way."

"We are not going to move from the spot," she answered, and the Bohemian turned again away, and disappeared among the bushes to the left.

The trunk made a pleasant seat, cushioned as it was by nature, and Gretchen felt glad of the rest. Dr Komers and Kurt had also sat down, for there was ample room for a dozen people more. Baron Tolnay remained standing. He held his hands behind him, and gazed fixedly at the trunk, with a look which told Gretchen that he had forgotten no detail of that day in early summer when they had first seen this fallen tree.

Presently Mr Howard came up, holding in his hand a brilliantly coloured fungus.

"I have spent five minutes in knocking this thing off a tree," he explained, as he sat down. "I am going to take it home with me, in order to show my wife, Lady Blanche Howard, what the savages here feed upon. I have taken the most poisonous-looking one I could find."

"I feel almost inclined to side with the savages at this moment," said Gretchen, gazing rather longingly at the shining fungus which Mr Howard held, and which to all appearances seemed to have been showered over with a permanent coating of dew-drops. "It looks

so cool and juicy, that I would risk the poison for the sake of the refreshment."

"Are you thirsty?" asked Mr Howard.

"I am parched. The Bohemian has gone to fill my flask, but he will not be back for a quarter of an hour."

"Now this is too provoking!" cried Mr Howard, rising. "Why did you not appeal to me? Don't you know that an Englishman is never without water. *Water, water, water*, as they din into my ears down there. I filled my flask fresh at the last spring."

Gretchen eagerly drank off the water which Mr Howard poured into his patent cup: when the first edge was off her thirst, she began to feel sorry for the Bohemian, who had started on a useless mission.

"Call him back," said Mr Howard; "he can't be far off,"—and he gave a lusty shout which seemed to shake the branches overhead.

"He can walk at a tremendous pace, when he chooses," said Kurt.

They listened for a moment, but there was no response.

"I wish he were back," said Gretchen, wearily. "I should like to be going home."

"Well, you do look rather weather-beaten," said Kurt, contemplating his sister. "It would be a bore to have to carry you down-hill. Where can that fellow be staying?"

"I shall find him," said Dr Komers, rising to his feet.

"You will lose your way," Mr Howard called after him; but the lawyer had already disappeared in the same direction which the Bohemian had taken some minutes before.

The evening was closing in rapidly, and the brilliant tints of

the forest beginning to fade to undefined greys.

Now that she was sitting, Gretchen began to realise how tired she was. Her feverish thirst was quenched, but a sort of numb weariness was stealing over her. The day had been one long strain. She had succeeded thus far in averting an explanation with Tolnay, but the effort had told upon her. A sense of discouragement chilled her now. This very spot suggested discouragement. When she had last been here, her hopes of finding *Gaura Draculus* had been so high; but the discovery of *Gaura Draculus* had never seemed more hopeless than it did just now. After weeks of wandering about the hills, they were exactly at the same point at which they had been that day. How indignantly she had then refuted Tolnay's words, when he had laughingly declared that there was no such place as her father described! It almost seemed to her now as if Tolnay had been right. She could herself have believed *Gaura Draculus* to be a myth, were it not for the look of terror she had seen so often on the Bohemian's face. She had at last reached the point of acknowledging to herself that the Bohemian's simplicity had baffled her cunning. "Why not put a pistol to the fellow's head?" Mr Howard had suggested, earlier in the day, having worked himself into one of the fits of passion to which the Bohemian's obstinacy periodically moved him; "he would speak fast enough then." To which Gretchen replied that, as long as the Bohemian's conscience was clear, he would not mind having a loaded cannon put to his head.

There was silence between the four people thus left alone in the forest, until István, pushing up his hat, which he had drawn over his

forehead, sat down on the trunk beside Gretchen.

He took the place by her side with a sort of ostentation—an outspoken defiance, which seemed to challenge the world to dispute his right, if it dared. At this moment Gretchen did not attempt any resistance: she felt so tired, both physically and mentally, that even if he had now seized her hand and renewed his declaration of the other day, she would have been too weary to repulse him.

But István made no such demonstration. He began digging at the lichens on the trunk beside him with the point of his stick, making, at the same time, some apparently harmless, if somewhat abrupt remarks.

"What a much pleasanter day it was when we were here last!" he observed.

"It was warmer," said Gretchen, for want of any more original remark.

"It was warmer, and the wood was green then, and the summer was beginning instead of ending. Everything was pleasanter. Don't you think so? We were a smaller party, too."

"That is not very complimentary to Mr Howard."

"Nor to other members of the party either," said István, striking off another tuft of grey lichen with his stick. Complimentary? Oh no, I am not in a mood for compliments."

He said the last words rather lower, then checked himself, and bent down towards the bark of the tree-stem. He seemed to have forgotten his last train of thought, and to be gazing very intently at the lichens he had just been mutilating. Gretchen followed his look, but she could see nothing that might have been supposed to call forth that fixed gaze. For a

minute or so he continued in deep silence to scrape away the moss, his whole attention absorbed in this apparently frivolous occupation. He stooped, raised his head, stooped again, lower this time, and then, looking up, said quickly and with a sudden laugh—

"Do you know what we are sitting on?"

"A beech-tree," said Gretchen, somewhat startled.

"Not a beech-tree, but *the* beech-tree: look what I found!"

"I did not know there was anything lost," said Kurt.

"There does not seem to be much to find," said Mr Howard, "except these eternal toadstools."

István had now laid down his stick, and with his fingers was tearing away the moss.

"Look!" was all he said, as he pointed to the spot. Gretchen looked, and on the place which Tolnay's stick had laid bare she saw two deep-cut crosses engraved in the bark of the fallen tree.

It was long since she had given a thought to the beech-tree which Adalbert had marked as a sign-post to *Gaura Dracului*: the recollection flashed back upon her now. In her excitement she sprang from her seat.

"Is there is a third cross, it is papa's mark," she cried. "Baron Tolnay, let me look!"

István's hand was there before hers; and while she was speaking the third cross was disclosed.

The marks were worn with time and weather, but they were unmistakable. This beech-tree bore three crosses on it, cut into the bark at what must have been the height of a man's stature, in the time when the stem had stood upright.

Just as the solution of a riddle, which we have tried in vain to guess, often provokes us by its very simplicity, so did it now ap-

pear absurd to Gretchen, and well-nigh incredible, that they should have been so near to the crosses and yet not have seen them. Why, in the midst of all their speculations, had they never contemplated the possibility of the tree which bore the marks being felled?

A minute was spent in examination and conjecture, and then followed the desire for immediate action. Gretchen had gone down on her knees to examine the marks more closely, but it was not long before she rose and looked about her, striving to recall her father's exact directions.

"When you have found that tree, you are not a hundred yards from the spot," Adalbert had said. In spite of herself, Gretchen began to tremble with the agitation of this thought.

Carefully turning in the direction which her father had indicated, and calculating her paces with all possible nicety, Gretchen began her search in advance of the others.

The incertitude did not last more than five minutes.

By an ingenious combination of excessively simple circumstances, *Gaura Dracului* lay so marvelously concealed that not one person in fifty passing close to the spot

would ever pass as its existence, and that fiftieth person whose ignorance was enlightened, would probably reap his experience by breaking his neck in a most ghastly fashion. A dip in the ground, exactly like a hundred other dips, and a tangle of bushes, scarcely more dense than in any other part of the forest, combined together to screen this black danger which lurked here in the very depth of the shadows.

Gretchen herself overshot the mark, for her eagerness upset her calculations. She was beginning again to doubt, when she heard Tolnay calling to her from a little way back—

"This way, this way!"

And Mr Howard shouted, "Yes, this way; but, in heaven's name, be careful!"

She turned back the way she had come, stumbled over a stone, and recovered herself; broke through a narrow opening in the tree, where the low-hanging branches struck her in the face, stooped down to escape them, and, with another step, stood still.

The rich undergrowth of moss and fern at her feet opened suddenly. She was standing on the brink of a space, irregularly circular—black, vacant, and immeasurably deep.

 THE TRAWLING COMMISSION AND OUR FISH-SUPPLY

TRAWLING, though a familiar word, has not hitherto been one of much meaning to the general public. Few persons are aware that some of the choicest forms of sea-fish, such as soles, turbot, and brill, are taken almost entirely by this method of fishing. Fewer still have any idea that 3000 deep-sea trawlers work off the coasts of Great Britain, employing a capital of £15,000,000, and catching annually about £3,000,000 worth of fish; or that the proportion of trawled fish to that taken in other ways in the London market, is about 5 or 6 to 1.

Trawling, or "trailing," has been practised on our southern coasts for about a century, but not to any great extent, except at Brixham, which may be said to have been built from the proceeds of that industry. It is, however, only within the last twenty or twenty-five years that trawling has been generally adopted; but it is now largely used not only off the coasts of the United Kingdom, but also in French, Dutch, and Belgian waters.

Such a rapid development has not been effected without a struggle. On the contrary, in certain places trawling has met with so much opposition, that even in this epoch of "burning questions," it is, along a considerable part of the coast of Great Britain, the most burning. In Aberdeen, for instance, the trawlers have been the object of a demonstration as effective, and probably far more hearty than that against the House of Lords itself. At Wick and Stornoway recent piratical outrages are expected to bring the complaint of the anti-trawlers within "the

range of practical politics;" while at St Andrews the fishermen have lately adopted the irrefutable argument of burning in effigy a Professor, whose opinions they supposed were unfavorable to their interests.

The section of the British coast to which allusion has just been made, and to which the remarks in this paper must be understood to be limited, lies between the Moray Firth and Flamborough Head. In this district the word "trawler" is associated with an extent of industrial, moral and even social iniquity, that would much astonish a south-countryman. This feeling, which proceeds, in the first instance, from the line and drift-net fishermen (whom we shall call, for shortness' sake, the fishermen), has, to a certain extent, infected all public opinion, and is by no means of recent origin. What is recent is the degree of fierceness to which it has reached. The reason of this outburst, and indeed the nature of the whole feud, cannot properly be understood without a short explanation of the *modus operandi* of these three methods of fishing, by whose friction so large a flame has been kindled.

"Trawling," or more strictly speaking, "beam-trawling," is fishing by means of the beam trawl-net. Let the reader imagine a large beam, from 20 to 50 feet long, resting on two iron shoes or runners, shaped like a D, with the curved side to the front, and standing from 3 to 4 feet high. If he can achieve this mental picture, we will next inform him that these runners are called the "head-irons," and present a flat surface to the ground of about 4 inches

wide. To the beam and to the straight sides of the head-irons is fastened a triangular net, often over 100 feet long, which drags behind the beam very much like the hood of a cloak turned topsy-turvy. The upper side of the hood is attached to the beam, the lower side is cut away in an elliptical curve, and rests on the bottom, the hollow of the curve being about a beam's length behind the line of the beam. The edge of the net along this curve is threaded to a hawser or chain, bound round with bits of smaller rope till it forms a roll of about 5 inches in diameter, and going by the name of the "ground-rope." The whole apparatus is fastened to the trawling-boat by a hawser, and dragged by her sledgewise along the bottom, in the same direction, but about a mile faster than the tide; the runners resting on the ground, and the net extended behind the beam by the motion through the water. After the runners have passed, the ground-rope behind them sweeps the bottom of the sea, stirring up the fish, who, being already under the upper side of the net, are unable to escape upwards, but are carried back by the rush of the water into the pocket. A smooth surface is therefore absolutely necessary for trawling; and, as a general rule, this method of fishing is confined to grounds where the bottom is firm and sandy, mud in any quantity being a most inconvenient presence in the net. Its operations are further limited by the depth of water, being mostly carried on in soundings of from 20 to 50 fathoms. The night is the most effective time for this kind of work, and the net is usually hauled up and its contents emptied once in every six hours. The size of the trawling-smacks varies from about 30 to 90 tons, and they are

propelled by sail or steam. The sailing trawlers are the larger, and mostly work at longer distances from the shore, going out to the Dogger and Fisher banks, whence the fish is packed in ice, and sent home in steam-carriers. The steam-trawlers seldom ply further out than 40 or 50 miles, as it does not pay them to be at sea when the trawl is idle. The usual take of the trawl consist of haddock, plaice, whiting, soles, turbot, gurnet cod, dabs and flounders. Herring are very seldom caught.

This description will, it is hoped, give the reader an idea of trawling sufficient for our present purpose. It does not include the small trawlers, such as "bumble-bees," shrimpers, "horse-trawlers," &c., who use a small variation of the beam trawl-net in the shallow waters inshore; this class of trawler, whatever its effects may be upon the fish, not having yet come into serious collision with the fishermen.

The line-fishermen have two sorts of lines, "small lines" and "great lines." The former are of a light bind, and are used near the coast (say at a distance of from 1 to 20 miles) for catching haddock. They are about 5 miles in length, and often carry as many as 13,440 hooks. The great lines are for the take of cod, ling, halibut, and skate, as well as haddock, and are shot either from 20 to 60 miles from shore, or on the great fishing banks in the middle of the North Sea. They are of stouter material than the haddock-lines, are from 6 to 8 miles long, but only have about 4680 hooks. Both these classes of lines are shot from the boats when under sail, and hauled in again in the same way, except in calms, when rowing-boats are used. The lines are shot across the tide, and are kept in position by buoys. The had-

dock-lines have seldom more than three buoys in their whole length, while the great lines show a buoy about every mile. The lines are shot just before daybreak, the haddock-lines being hauled as soon as shot, though the great lines are generally left down till slack water.

Drift-nets are used, in the districts with which we are now dealing, almost entirely in the herring-fishery, though further south they are largely employed for mackerel. These nets are from 1 to 2 miles long, and about 30 feet deep. They are suspended in a straight line, at, or a little below, the surface, by means of floats; and are allowed to drift with the tide, forming a sort of floating fence. The fish, when they meet this obstacle, run their heads into the meshes, and attempting to get through, are caught by the gills and unable to go back. The usual time for drift-net fishing is at night, the fish being taken in the greatest quantities just after sundown or before dawn.

The line and drift-net boats, depending as they do mostly upon small tidal harbours, are, as a class, much smaller than the trawlers. The long-line smacks are the largest; but many of the drift-net and haddock boats are undecked, although of late years there has been an increasing tendency to build boats of a larger class for these industries.

It will not require a prolonged study of the above description to show that a collision between trawling on the one hand, and drift-net and fishing-line on the other, is as inevitable as when one gentleman at an Irish fair is dragging a coat, and another is looking for a coat to tread upon.

In the first place, it must be remembered that fishing is not

carried on to an equal extent in all the spaces of the sea, but is confined to certain grounds frequented by the fish for the purpose of spawning, of obtaining food, or for other reasons not yet fully understood. We have therefore, at the outset, fishing-boats of these three kinds all plying their trade in certain districts of limited area. It is not, however, the mere community of haunts that produces the collision between fishermen and trawlers. Unfortunately the form and method of trawling is almost, one might say, physically antagonistic to the other two systems of fishing. Drift-nets and lines are of a fragile nature, easily broken and destroyed, and when so treated, are difficult to recover. They are, as we have seen, of great length, and are laid across the stream of the tide, thus forming a series of obstacles, sometimes 2 miles, sometimes 8 miles from end to end, planted about a particular sea area, at right angles to the course of trawlers, who are perpetually working up and down. In addition to this, the lines themselves are only marked by small buoys, often at long intervals from each other, and which are, in rough weather, invisible beyond a short distance. The trawler can pass through any number of lines without damage to himself; indeed he may be often ignorant that he has done so. The boat to which the lines belong, even if her position would always give a clue to the lie of her gear, may be at a long distance from the point where the line is crossed. In the case of nets, the boat is of course nearer to her property; but without experience of that kind of fishing, there is no means of telling the direction in which the nets are laid, unless the floats can be

sighted—a process which is often difficult or impossible. Moreover, owing to the caste-feeling between the two trades, the master of a trawler has seldom had any experience of line or net fishing, and his crew never. They are thus less able to judge the probable position of this kind of gear, and the best means of avoiding damage. Finally, when we remember that all the three methods of fishing are carried on largely in the dark or dusk, we shall cease to be surprised that collision between them has been frequent, and that much bad blood has resulted therefrom.

Indeed for many years there have been loud complaints made by the fishermen, not only as to interference with, and injury to, the nets and lines, on the part of the trawlers, but also as to the harmful effect of trawling upon the fish-supply.

Now, although there is no necessary connection between these two charges, it will be found that, in the history of the trawling question, they always appear together; and that, in regions where the physical collision between fishermen and trawlers is slight, the injurious effects of trawling on the fish-supply do not strike the fishermen so forcibly. It is not indeed surprising that, an ill-feeling having been once established by one particular grievance, all other grievances that arise should be attributed to the same cause, especially in the absence of other satisfactory explanations for their existence. Nothing is really more difficult to account for than a bad fishing season occurring after a good one; but to a fisherman, who has for some time past looked upon steam-trawler X as the root of all evil, the cause is ready to hand.

We find, accordingly, that such complaints have always existed,

even in the days when trawling was practised to a far less extent than at present. For instance, in 1862, representations were made by the St. Monace men against trawling in the Traith Hole off the mouth of the Firth of Forth; and the Scottish Fishery Board were induced to order a suspension of trawling on that ground. Again, in 1866 and 1878, when Commissions were appointed to investigate the whole question of the state of the sea-fisheries of the United Kingdom, the fishermen of the north-east coast complained of a general decrease of fish, but especially of haddock, which they attributed entirely to the trawlers. Both these Commissions, however, came to the conclusion that no decrease was visible in the supply of fish on our coasts, and that no injurious effects were to be apprehended from an unrestricted use of the beam-trawl.

In the Report of the Commissioners of 1878, the following passage occurs:—

“Inshore trawling has been practised more or less for a great many years. The practice has undoubtedly increased of late months in the North Sea. The cause of its increase is so singular that it is worth explaining. It appears almost paradoxical to assert that the stagnation of trade has led to a revolution in fishing; but paradoxical as the statement may seem, it is nevertheless true. The steam-tugs plying at the mouth of the Tyne and the Wear have been thrown out of employ by slack trade. Their masters, despairing of obtaining other profitable work for them, have placed trawls on board of them, and have sent them out to fish. But the tugs are hardly fitted to fish the distant grounds in the North Sea to which the trawling fleet usually repair. They are compelled, therefore, if they trawl at all, to trawl on the inshore grounds, on which the hook-and-line men have hitherto enjoyed a practical monopoly. In many cases, without the assistance

of steam, that monopoly could not have been disturbed. The trawlers can only work on a smooth bottom, and on most places on the east coast of England the bottom is alternately 'hard' and 'smooth'; or, in less technical language, patches of rock crop up in the midst of sand or mud. A sailing smack, dependent on her sails, and forced to tack, has hardly room to work on the small patches of mud and sand without fouling her trawl on the rocks. A steamer, able to turn more quickly, can avoid the rocks, and work on the smaller patches of smooth."

Since these words were written, steam-trawling has developed to a great extent on our north-east coasts. It is not only tugs out of work that are now used; but steamers are built solely for the trade, fitted with steam-winches, ice-holds, and other modern appliances. In 1884 there were about 140 steam-trawlers at work between the Moray Firth and Flamborough Head. Whatever the direction of the wind, these vessels can make as many continuous hauls as they please, going up with one tide and down with the next. Also, from their practice of working near the land, they come in contact with the slighter and less adequately buoyed haddock-lines, which are, of all gear, the most liable to damage.

This new development has, it may be gathered from the above description, added fresh fuel to the flames of the dispute between the fishermen and the trawlers. If, for all the reasons we have enumerated, a *modus vivendi* between fishing-boats and sailing trawlers was difficult, that difficulty is tenfold greater in the case of the steamer. But besides the more obvious causes of collision, there are others of a less evident character. A good many of the steam-trawlers coasting off the

Scotch coast belong to English ports. The difference of habits and religion shown by these strangers, in such a way, for instance, as occasional trawling on Sunday, are displeasing to the Scotch. Also, in event of actual collision, there is naturally less desire for mutual accommodation, where the disputants belong to the two countries. The steam-trawlers are usually fitted out by a company or a well-to-do fish-merchant, while the boats are the property of the fishermen themselves. Hence the catch-words, "rich and poor," "capital and labour," are mixed up in the controversy, affording welcome opportunities to the professional agitator. Finally, as much seamanship is not required on board a steam-trawler, the crews are often filled in with "soldiers," longshore loafers, and others, who are looked upon by the regular fishermen with contempt.

Apart from these sentimental grievances, the position of the fishermen is one deserving of great sympathy. They are face to face with a new industry in direct rivalry with their own, which, as a more efficient method of catching certain classes of fish, is gradually driving them from a large portion of the market. This must in itself be sufficiently galling to men, in whose families the fishing trade has often been hereditary for long periods, and who are absolutely dependent on it for making a living. Moreover, the present law of public property in the fishing-grounds is greatly to the advantage of the trawlers. Resident fishermen, who have been accustomed to fish on grounds that their ancestors have worked, naturally feel jealous at the appearance of strange boats. But when, after a period of successful fishing, they see these strangers put off to fresh grounds, leaving

nothing but diminished takes to the residents, it is not to be wondered if they consider themselves victims of an undoubted wrong. Nor is that all. In addition to being driven from the market, they find that the operations of their rivals have often the effect of driving them from the sea. Not only are they beaten in the race by fair running, but they are liable to be tripped up and crippled by their antagonists. It is as though the tram-cars of a prosperous line were not content with running omnibuses and cabs off the road, but actually ran them down as well.

From the operation of these various causes, a state of feeling has arisen that cannot be better described than by a few extracts taken from the evidence given before the Commission that has recently investigated the subject, and to whose appointment we shall shortly refer.

"665. Instead of seeking to keep clear of the fishermen and the lines, they [the trawlers] take away the lines intentionally; and they not only take away the lines, but they try to drown the fishermen."

"696. My wife, while selling fish the other day, found a woman in Aberdeen got the jaundice through eating fish caught by the trawlers."

"3608. Make no wonder though you hear of murder on the high seas betwixt fishermen and trawlers."

"4871. To tell you the truth, gentlemen, there is no tongue can tell you the trials, and the disadvantages, and the grievances we have to meet with at sea. It is one thing to sit on this bench before you, gentlemen, to try and express it, but it is another thing to be on the ground and feel it."

"7820. I will tell you what I think about them trawlers, sir,—there is a lot of the scum of Hull gets into them. I believe a soldier can be a trawler fisherman."

"3164. Every one abandoned it [trawling]. Why? Because they were doing evil."

"9863. Some people say that trawling is a discovery of science, but I think that no science is good that destroys nature, which we know trawling does. At the beginning of the world the Almighty fixed His canon against all destroyers of animated nature, and told her to be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the elements."

Frequent representations, in the shape of letters and complaints, in a similar language and spirit to these extracts, having been made to the Board of Trade and other authorities, the President of that Board appointed a Commission in September 1883 to

"inquire into and report upon the complaints that have been made by the line and drift-net fishermen of injuries sustained by them in their calling, owing to the use of the trawl-net and beam-trawl, in the territorial waters of the United Kingdom; and to ascertain how far these complaints are well founded, and whether any, and what, legislative remedy can be adopted without interfering with the cheap and plentiful supply of fish."

The Report of this Commission has lately been presented to her Majesty, and is now accessible to her subjects in the form of a Blue-book. Between the general reader and a Blue-book there exists a natural antipathy, which, however justifiable on ordinary occasions, is in the present instance to be regretted. A subject like trawling, affecting a class so interesting as the fishermen, and a question so important as our fish-supply, cannot fail to have some attractions, especially in those northern regions that lie around the cradle of 'Maga,' which are the principal battle-ground of the opposing forces. We therefore propose to put before our readers a few of the present aspects of the trawling

question, as disclosed in the Commissioners' Report, in a lighter and less formal style than such a serious publication allows, adding from time to time such information or comment as may seem necessary.

The complaints of the fishermen against the trawlers, fall, as the Commissioners point out, into two classes : first, those of decrease of fish ; secondly, those of damage to gear.

As regards the second of these points, we have already touched upon the state of things out of which it arises, showing how the natural rivalry of the fishermen and trawlers is aggravated by the conditions of their respective industries. This exasperation is unfortunately kept alive by the peculiar difficulties that lie in the way of recovering damage for injuries of this description, should the trawler deny his liability.

In the first place, there is the difficulty of identification. As the Commission says —

"When nets or lines are injured, the mischief usually takes place during the night or about daybreak, and often at a considerable distance from the boat to which the damaged gear belongs. There may be several trawlers at work in the neighbourhood, and the fishermen cannot say by what vessel the damage was done. . . . Sometimes the trawler is plainly visible, but is so distant, or steering in such a direction that her number and letters, which are only painted on her bow, are not distinguishable by the crew of the fishing-boat."

The fishermen are unable to follow her to take her number, because of the further loss they might incur if they deserted their gear in its broken condition. There is also the impossibility, under certain circumstances, of overtaking a steamer. But even if the offender be identified, the fishermen have a great dislike to going to law, owing

to "a combination of difficulties, such as probably exist in the case of no other litigation," which have to a great extent prevented their obtaining adequate redress either in civil suits for damages or prosecutions under the Sea Fisheries Acts. To enter further into this question would protract our paper to an undue length. It is, too, a matter of more interest to the fishermen and trawlers themselves than to the general public, and depends to a great extent upon Acts of Parliament, rendered more than usually obscure by their having to be read together with International Fishery Conventions.

The question of the fish-supply, on the other hand, not only affects the whole population of the United Kingdom, but is also of considerable attraction to the general reader, being concerned not merely with the fate of a particular branch of the fisheries, but with the natural laws that govern the habits of all fish. It will, however, be easily understood, that in proportion as this part of the Commissioners' inquiry embraces a wider and more varied field than the other, so is the difficulty of arriving at the truth concerning it increased. Unfortunately we are extremely ignorant of all that relates to the food-fishes of the sea. Such knowledge is not easy to come at, and hitherto there have been no practical reasons for investigation in that direction. We have always had as much fish as we wanted, taking one season with another, and the supply has seemed practically inexhaustible. In the case of some fishes that ascend our rivers it has been different ; their numbers have been rapidly diminished by over-fishing ; we have been compelled to investigate their lives, and regulate their capture by the knowledge thus obtained. But of

the great shoals that inhabit the sea, what do you know? What do we know of the spawning, the growth, the food, the enemies of such fish; of the effect upon them of the saltness or temperature of the water, of the varying conditions of the air? Nay, more,—owing to the absence of any regular fishing statistics, we cannot tell the number of fish caught annually, the number of boats, the extent of the gear employed, or the time spent in the fishing. Without knowledge of this kind, upon what sort of evidence must we fall back? Upon that of the fishermen themselves. Now there is probably no finer class of men in these islands than the fishermen. Numbers of them have the bravery and simplicity of men whose life is one of struggle and hardship, and who are accustomed to look danger in the face. But it cannot be said that they are altogether fitted to give accurate evidence on a question of this kind. They have fished in the ways they fish now for centuries. Although constantly at sea, they have little leisure; and even if they had, do not possess the educated faculty necessary for close observation.

If they do observe, it is through the glasses of tradition, handed down to them by their forefathers, and anything beyond the rim of these they will not see. Further, in evidence so obtained, there is always great difficulty in separating facts from inferences, especially when the matter to be investigated is closely bound up with the interests of the witness. In addition to all this, the fishermen have no means but memory of comparing the results of present with those of former years. No records of their takes are kept, except such approximations as may be reached through the fish-curer and the fish-

merchant,—no accounts of the amount of fish they sell, or the money they make in each year—of the time spent at sea, or the state of the weather in each season. Finally in the words of the Commissioners—

“The increase in the number and size of the fishing-boats, and in the efficiency of their apparatus, make it difficult to say how far the supply of fish brought to market is an accurate test of the increased or diminished productiveness of the fishing-grounds. Nor do the grounds themselves always remain the same. New grounds are discovered in addition to those formerly used, and in some cases old grounds are abandoned.”

In view of these many difficulties that met them upon the threshold of their investigation, the Commissioners seem to have adopted the best course that was open to them. While they were occupied themselves in taking evidence from the fishermen and trawlers, Professor McIntosh, of St Andrews University, was directed to carry on a series of experiments as to the actual effects of the trawl. For this purpose a sum of £200 was advanced by the Treasury, and arrangements were made with owners of steam-trawlers at Granton and Aberdeen, under which the Professor was to be taken on board for the ordinary trips, and allowed to register the contents of the trawl-net. The chief object of these experiments was to obtain accurate information respecting the destruction of immature fish and spawn, said to be caused by trawling. Professor McIntosh began his voyages in January 1884, and continued them to the end of August in the same year. During their continuance, ninety-three hauls of the trawl were made, upon the ordinary fishing-grounds off the Scotch coast, the results of

which were carefully registered by the Professor, and summarised in a valuable paper, printed in the Appendix to the Commissioners' Report.

The presence of this paper, and its accompanying register, is a feature in the evidence of the late Commission. The previous Commission had proceeded entirely upon unscientific evidence, such as that of fishermen, and others practically acquainted with the question. In the present case, however, the Commissioners were able to test and compare all such statements with the actual results of trawling as studied by an impartial person trained to habits of observation. It is true that the short duration of these experiments prevents their being conclusive in a scientific sense; but as a rough test of the effects of trawling, it cannot be denied that they greatly strengthen the report of the Commissioners. The only other experiments of a like character in the history of the trawling question, are those that were carried out in Galway Bay under the Irish Fishery Board during the years 1873-1876. The results of these, in important points, agree, it is satisfactory to learn, with those obtained by Professor M'Intosh.

Quitting then, the materials from which the Commissioners have drawn their conclusions on the question of the decrease of the fish-supply, we will now proceed to those conclusions themselves.

The Commissioners of 1866 and 1878, as has been mentioned in an earlier part of this paper, came to the conclusion that no decrease was visible in the supply of fish on our coasts. This consoling view is not, we regret to say, altogether borne out by the report we are now considering. That report says paragraph 16 :—

"After carefully considering the whole evidence upon the question of the decrease of fish, we are of opinion that—

"As regards territorial waters—

"(1.) On many fishing-grounds, from the Moray Firth to Grimsby, there has been a falling off in the lakes of flat-fish, both as regards quantity and quality.

"(2) There has also been a decrease in the takes of haddock in certain places, chiefly in bays and estuaries.

"As regards offshore waters—

"(3.) No decrease, except in the case of soles, has been proved on the total takes of the North Sea."

The conclusions of the Commissioners as to the decrease of haddock and flat-fish are based upon the almost universal testimony of the fishermen, confirmed by the result of Professor M'Intosh's observations. As regards the soles, the evidence was mainly that of the trawlers themselves, this kind of fish being taken solely by the trawl-net.

Now, looking at these conclusions for a moment, apart from any cause to which they are attributed, they point undoubtedly towards a serious fact, and one that demands the careful consideration of the Government. Up to the present time all sea-fishery legislation has been based upon the theory that there are more fish in the sea than ever came out of it. In the light of this axiom, all methods of sea-fishing have been free, and the sea within the territorial waters has been looked upon as the property of the nation.

But if it be shown that, owing to the indiscriminate use of any method of fishing, or to the want of a close-time for any species of fish, or to any other cause, there is an undoubted diminution in that supply which has always been considered inexhaustible, it is clear that we must reconsider our posi-

tion. Decrease unchecked ends in destruction : and if the haddock-fishery in narrow waters, and the flat-fish fishery all along the coast, are allowed to go on decreasing till they are practically destroyed, we shall have killed a goose that has laid golden eggs of untold value. The inshore haddock-fisheries on the north-east coast give employment to a large number of the smaller boats, and to old men and boys, who are physically unable to follow the deep-sea fishing, as well as to steam-trawlers. If these fisheries have to be abandoned, only the richer fishermen, who are able to build the larger boats, will remain in the trade, the supply of the freshest and best quality of fish will be seriously diminished, and the market will be largely dependent upon the less palatable iced fish that is caught out at sea. Also, the further it is necessary to go to catch the fish, the dearer will it become. Besides, as the number of larger boats increase, so will the offshore banks become more crowded ; and there seems to be no reason why the decrease that has begun inshore should not extend further and further from the coast. A greater risk will also be incurred by those taking part in the fisheries.

In the case of soles, the destruction is still more serious, as, not being limited to inshore waters, it may be expected to end in the total extermination of the species. Of all the food-fishes of the sea, the sole is most popular, and if any legislation could prevent its becoming extinct, no time should be lost in initiating it. But it is here that the real difficulty of the question meets us. In what direction is such legislation to proceed ? To what cause is the diminution of these three kinds of fish due ? If it is due to the force of Nature, we

cannot hope to "expel her by the fork" of an Act of Parliament. If, however, it is the result of over fishing, of fishing in any particular way, or even of general disturbance of the fishing-grounds, the remedy is in our own hands, even if we have to "lay hands on our father Protogoras," in the shape of Political Economy.

It is clearly, then, of the first importance to determine what the cause or causes of the alleged decrease really are. If we were to inquire of the fishermen, we should get but one answer—Trawling is the cause. As, however, we have endeavoured to point out, there are reasons why fishermen just now are not altogether the most impartial judges of the effects of trawling. Moreover, unfortunately for their own general allegations, they have given particulars of the ways in which the mischief is done. These are reducible to four : (1.) Destruction of spawn ; (2.) Destruction of immature fish ; (3.) Injury to food of fish and bait-beds ; (4.) Disturbance and exhaustion of fishing-grounds.

The above charges practically cover the whole case of the opponents of trawling. We propose, therefore, to deal with them *seriatim*, varying the order in which they appear in the Commissioners' Report, for the purpose of keeping the most important of the four to the last.

Destruction of spawn is alleged to occur by the pressure of the "runners," which we have described as carrying the trawl-beam ; and by the passage of the ground rope along the bottom. It is also alleged that spawn is brought up in the net in great quantities and so killed. Now, for trawling to produce these effects, it is necessary that the spawn should be on the bottom of the sea ; and it is a curi-

ous instance of the vitality of tradition in the face of experience, that the fishermen examined by the Commissioners maintained to a man that all spawn did sink to the bottom. Far from this being the case, recent investigations in Norway, America, and Scotland, have established as an undoubted fact, that ripe and uninjured ova of cod, haddock, and flat-fish, and many others, either float on the surface of the water or a little below it. The only important exception to this rule is the spawn of the herring. It is, therefore, herring-spawn only that could suffer by the action of the trawl, and in the takes of this fish, the Commissioners find that there has been no diminution.

If evidence of reputation were to be trusted, the trawlers would come off badly on the charge of destroying immature fish. The bad name that they have incurred in this respect is perhaps due to the work of the small trawlers alluded to in the beginning of this paper, who on many parts of the coast work close inshore, and probably do destroy a large amount of fry. Although, throughout the evidence taken by the Commission, it is clearly the belief of the fishermen that this evil prevails to a very large extent, they do not seem to have produced any really conclusive proofs of its existence. In the experiments of Professor M'Intosh, the immature fish registered as caught in the trawl were mostly of the less valuable kinds. The quantity of young haddock and whiting taken was inconsiderable, the immature specimens of these fishes being generally found in the mouths of the larger kinds—a state of things that makes the trawlers their avengers rather than their murderers. It seems likely, that below a certain size the fry escape altogether through the

meshes of the trawl-net, as Professor M'Intosh states that it was rare to capture dabs under 5½ inches in length, and that in using the small trawl close inshore in St Andrews Bay, none of the smaller flat-fishes with which that region abounds were taken. This absence of immature fish in large quantities from the trawl-net was fully borne out by the trawlers themselves; and it seems clear that, at any rate in the districts visited by the Commission, there is no wasteful or unnecessary destruction of food-fishes committed in this way.

The next charge we come to is that of "injury to the food of fish and the bait-beds." It is easy to understand that constant trawling on a limited area, such as a mussel-bed, may injure and disturb the inhabitants, and deprive the fishermen of their supply of bait. Indeed this possibility has been recognised by the Legislature, who have given power to the Board of Trade to suspend trawling in such places. But the alleged damage done by the trawl to the bottom of the sea, and to "the invertebrate bottom fauna" inhabiting the banks where the fish feed, seems to be of a somewhat visionary character. All that appear to suffer are the more brittle forms of submarine life, such as star-fish, sea-urchins, &c. Other forms of these creatures of a more pliable nature would probably receive little injury from the ground-rope, while the surface of the head-irons is too small to do material damage. In all probability this view of the injurious effects of the trawl-net was originally founded upon the idea that, strange to say, still exists in the minds of some of the fishermen (cf. Ans. 6334), that the heavy trawl-beam itself is dragged along the bottom of the sea.

So far, we have seen that the ways in which the fishermen attempt to connect the trawl-net with the decrease of fish as cause and effect, have scarcely succeeded in establishing their contention. The last and most serious count of their indictment is "disturbance and exhaustion of the fishing-grounds." By "disturbance" is meant the driving away of the fish for a longer or shorter time; by "exhaustion," the working out of any particular ground by over-fishing.

The evidence for and against this charge is, unfortunately, of the same indefinite character as that with which we have had to deal all along, rendering only approximate results possible. And if this be true as regards the existence of any particular state of things, such as the increase or diminution of fish on a particular bank, much more does it apply to any attempt to ascertain the causes that have produced such a result.

This difficulty is strongly felt in the case of a disturbance. As the Commissioners say, "Several cases of a specific character were mentioned to us, where shoals of herring and haddock were alleged to have disappeared from particular fishing-grounds after the trawlers had begun to work there. We have had no satisfactory proof that trawling was the cause of this disappearance."

A fisherman may come with a story that a shoal of herring has been frightened away in a night by the trawlers, and it may be the fact that the fish have disappeared; but until we can say that no other causes affect the movements of herring but fear of a trawl-net, we cannot safely ascribe their departure to the working of that implement. It is perfectly possible that the moving of the fish may be only a step in a process of whose

course we are ignorant. It may be the result of scarcity of food, change of temperature, presence of enemies, or some other alteration of the natural conditions. Still more difficult it is to say whether repeated disturbance could ever, in any case, have the effect of permanently causing fish to desert any particular area. There have been undoubted instances of fish abandoning grounds without any assignable cause—viz., the disappearance of haddock from Dublin Bay, and the extraordinary fluctuations of the Bohuslan herring-fisheries in Sweden.

The question of "disturbance" would seem in reality to be really one of degree. The amount of disturbance that would scare fish from a small fishing-bank, would have no effect when disturbed over a large one. Trawling has gone on at Brixham on the same grounds for over 100 years without affecting the large offshore banks, but some of the Brixham witnesses before the Commission thought that the increase in the number of trawlers was beginning to tell on the smaller grounds near the shore. On the Dogger Bank, or the fishing-grounds off the mouth of the Firth of Forth, disturbance is an unknown word; but in St Andrews Bay, or in the Firth itself, its effects are stated to be plainly visible. And as the whole question is one of degree, so is the part played by the trawler in the matter. If herrings are scared by the passage of a trawl-net of 100 feet by 50, surely they will not be indifferent to the presence of two miles of drift-net filled with struggling members of their species. The blame due to the trawlers in alarming the fish must depend "on the proportion their operations bear in any particular locality to those of other modes of fishing." Perhaps, too, the fishing-boats,

though the chief, are not the only offenders. The large increase in the number of vessels, particularly steamers, which perpetually come up and down the waters near the shore, may not be without some influence on the fish. Indeed, when we find how many circumstances are considered to affect the peace of mind of our sea-fishes, we cannot be surprised if they are occasionally "disturbed." The following are some of the causes given in the returns of the Coast-guard officers, as producing a decrease of fish in the inshore waters of their districts, and are to be found in the Appendix to the Commissioners' Report: "Shifting of banks," "change in set of currents," "washing of artificial manures from the land," "firing guns from forts," "excursion steamers," "dog-fish," "cutting sea-weed," "ashes thrown from steamers," "French boats throwing guts of herring into the sea," and in one case, "the sinking of a French vessel laden with paraffin-oil."

On the whole, it still remains an open question whether it can be established that disturbance has any effect upon the fisheries at all. Given its possibility, it is clear, from what we have seen, that there may be other disturbers besides the trawlers. But whatever the truth concerning it, "disturbance" is not really a question of vital importance. The disturbed fish may go to other banks and be caught there—at any rate, their place will be taken by others if the water is left quiet; for of mere disturbance causing fish permanently to desert any fishing-ground, there is as yet no evidence whatever. In the case, however, of "exhaustion" by over-fishing, much more serious issues are involved.

Repeated instances are given in

the evidence taken by the Commissioners, where, after trawlers have been at work upon a ground, the fish-supply begins to diminish, and on their continuing to work, continues to diminish. Indeed the trawlers themselves virtually allow this, admitting that it is part of their system to change their ground from time to time, as they find a falling off in their takes. Professor M'Intosh, too, does not hesitate to attribute to trawling a "considerable effect" on the inshore fisheries at Aberdeen and elsewhere, and in his evidence (Ans. 22,348) the following passage occurs: "Your experience in St Andrews Bay is to this effect: that a limited area may be *trawled out*,¹ but that after a time it may be restocked with fish."—"Restocked with fish." And Professor Cossar Ewart, of the Scotch Fishery Board, agrees (1268) with this conclusion.

Now it is clear that if the supply of fish in a given area can be perceptibly diminished by fishing, it only requires over-fishing to produce exhaustion. Nor are we able to console ourselves with the reflection that this possibility is confined to narrow waters. If, as the Commissioners say, "continuous fishing with such an effective implement as the beam-trawl, within a limited area, may sensibly diminish the number of fish," the large offshore banks are just as liable to exhaustion as the inshore ones, provided they are subjected to a proportionate strain upon their sources. Now once this is allowed, the exhaustion of all fishing-grounds is a mere question of time. At present, as we have observed, exhaustion has not showed itself on any general scale. There is, however, no reason why, if fishing continues to develop at the rate that

¹ The italics are the writer's.

it has been doing of recent years, the symptoms already evident at Aberdeen, St Andrews, and Scarborough should not spread.

It is, however, with "exhaustion" as with disturbance. It is not the trawlers only who "exhaust." Other methods of fishing play their part in the process. Now, in the Scotch districts between the Moray Firth and Eyemouth, first-class fishing-boats have increased since 1881 by 102, and second-class boats by 29. A few years ago there were no steam-trawlers in the same region, but in 1883 their number is returned at about 47. Although no similar returns are published for England, there is probably a still greater increase in the fishing-boats of all kinds built in the ports of that country. Nor is this all. An immense development has taken place of late years in fishing apparatus of all kinds, and more effective methods for its uses have come into vogue. Both nets and lines have increased in size, and are made of better material; steam-winches have been introduced on board the trawlers; and the use of ice and carrying steamers enables boats to go farther to sea, and to remain continuously at work for long periods. • Steam line-fishing vessels have already been tried, and found to answer in the Tyne; and there is every probability that this class of vessel will generally be adopted. Thus, if the causes that have already on several grounds sensibly diminished the quantity of fish, continue to multiply and become more powerful, there is every reason to think that "exhaustion" may appear in other places. Nor are we without some slight indications that actually point to some such result.

At the commencement of their inquiry the Commissioners issued a series of questions to all the

Coast-guard officers of the United Kingdom, requesting information as to the condition of the inshore fisheries, and the methods of fishing employed in each district. In fifty-two districts out of eighty-five there was said to be a falling off in the takes of fish; and in forty-five of these districts trawling in some shape was said to be carried on. Questions of the like import were also sent to the Governments of countries whose territories are situated on the coasts of the North Sea. In Denmark, Holland, and Germany there is an alleged decrease in the inshore fishing. In the two latter countries trawling is carried on, though by sailing-vessels only. Finally, in a table given in the Appendix to the Commissioners' Report, giving the state of the inshore fishing in Scotch fishery districts where trawling is not carried on, or only to a slight extent, no decrease of the takes is returned except in four cases.

These facts, so far as they are trustworthy, point to the conclusion that trawling in the narrow waters and on the smaller banks of our inshore fisheries is beginning to make itself felt, possibly as a large and effective factor in our system of fishing, possibly as part of that continuous disturbance that may be driving fish everywhere into the deeper waters. The other causes that produce variation in the fish-supply would, of course, produce their effects whether trawling existed or not. But it seems clear, at any rate, that trawling and greater or less falling off of the fish-supply do coexist in many places, and that the more trawlers there are, the more the fish fall off,—the process being quickened by the superior efficacy of the apparatus in the case of steam-trawling. Of course it may be said that the evil will cure itself, for that as soon

as the supply of a particular ground is lessened, that ground will be abandoned till it has regained its normal condition. But it does not seem by any means certain that recovery will always ensue in such cases. Several instances—for example, that of the estuary of the Tay—were mentioned in the evidence before the Commissioners, where the productiveness of waters that have been over-fished was said to have never been restored. Moreover, in the present state of the law, that allows unrestricted fishing, no favourably situated ground would enjoy sufficient quiet for complete recovery. Boats would flock there on the first appearance of fish, and it is quite conceivable that constant attacks of this sort would prevent the ground ever regaining its former productiveness. But even if it is likely that any given area would be left alone till the productiveness of its waters was thoroughly restored, a system of fishing carried on in this way would be of the most wasteful kind. Over-fishing a bank once every two or three years would not yield nearly so much to the markets as a fair annual catch on the same ground. Besides, the hardship to the local fishermen, touched upon above, would be so intensified, that their trade would in all probability disappear, and instead of a regular and equal supply along the whole coast, the fishing would flit from place to place, according to the state of the ground.

As regards the causes, other than over-fishing, that may produce "exhaustion" of a fishing-ground, it is, in the present state of our knowledge impossible to define their power, or how far their action may be local or general. In the words of the Commissioners—

"It is only reasonable to suppose

that the seasons, and perhaps other causes, of which nothing is as yet known, largely influence the supply of fish. There may be good and bad fishing years on the sea, just as there are good and bad harvests on land. And as good and bad harvests frequently come in cycles, good and bad fishing seasons may do the same. We have no statistics for any length of time, except from Scotland, and there only in regard to herring (which fully bear out this view), to enable us to say how far this has been the case hitherto. The recollection of fishermen extending over a long period of years, are not sufficiently precise to allow any conclusion to be based upon them. And although we consider that the supply of certain kinds of fish, in certain places in the territorial waters, has diminished in recent years, we cannot estimate precisely the degree in which the diminution has taken place. Without accurate statistical information, extending over many years, it is impossible to form any satisfactory opinion upon the point. We are therefore unable to come to the conclusion that trawling is the sole cause of the decrease of fish in inshore waters. In so far as it may contribute to that decrease, we think it can only be as part of a system of over-fishing, and not because of any wasteful destruction of spawn, fish-food, or immature fish."

We must, however, be on our guard, in the presence of such a tangible and manageable cause as "exhaustion" by the operation of man, against imputing too much to the action of natural forces, that may or may not exist. There is always a temptation to exaggerate the unknown; and this human failing is especially tempting, when by adopting it we may escape responsibility. At any rate, the fact of our being unable to gauge unknown influences, should not prevent us from modifying the injurious effect of those that are known,—and of these trawling is undoubtedly the most prominent, though it is quite possible it may not be the only one. It remains, then to be

asked. What restrictions, if any, should be imposed upon the use of the beam-trawl?

Now it would of course be absurd to think of abolishing altogether an industry which, even in 1868, was described as the source of by far the greatest and most progressive supply of fish, other than herring, to the principal markets of this country; as the only mode of fishing by which certain descriptions of fish, such as soles and plaice, could be largely supplied; and as engaging the largest capital, and employing the most numerous body of hardy fishermen; as least under the control of the weather, and as obtaining the greatest returns of fish for the labour and capital employed.

Nor do the Commissioners make any such sweeping recommendations. The present fishery authorities of the United Kingdom are,—in Ireland, a Fishery Board, endowed by Act of Parliament with power to regulate methods of fishing, and to make by-laws for its protection; in Scotland, a Fishery Board, with many duties but no powers; and in England, an inspector of salmon-fisheries. The Commissioners suggest that a fishery authority should be created for England, and that this body and the Scotch Board should possess powers similar to those now held by the Irish Board; that statutory powers should be conferred on all those Boards for the collection of statistics, an annual sum allowed them for scientific experiments.

If these suggestions be adopted by the Legislature, they ought to put an end to the trawling question for good and all. Proper statistics of the number of fish caught in particular seasons, the number of boats employed, the nature and efficiency of the apparatus, and the time spent in fishing, would enable comparisons

to be made between the takes of various seasons, showing whether any alleged decrease in the fish-supply was real or imaginary, as well as the rate and degree of such decrease. Regular scientific observation directed towards the habits of food-fishes, their times and places of spawning, the history of their ova, the growth of their fry, and the influence upon their movements of changes of temperature, of the saltness or specific gravity of the water, and of the state of the weather, would go far towards elucidating the number of causes affecting their distribution in our seas. Finally, a temporary suspension of one of several modes of fishing would, combined with the knowledge obtained as above mentioned, give some data for estimating the influence of the various methods of catching fish upon the supply of any particular region. With all these means of arriving at a just decision, the Fishery Boards would be able to act with an authority that our present imperfect knowledge renders impossible. If these bodies came to the conclusion that any one mode of fishing—trawling, for instance—was doing permanent damage to any particular ground, they could suspend it at discretion, or prescribe a close-time when they thought such a remedy would be sufficient.

It is, however, to be feared, though the trawling controversy may be set at rest, that the fishermen themselves will not benefit much, whatever may be the legislation of the future on this vexed question. The fishery authorities cannot well stop trawling on the plea of "exhaustion," and permit, say, twenty boats to fish for haddock upon the same bank with lines, each of which has 13,440 hooks.

Indeed, the more we look the matter in the face, the more does

the long and short of the whole question seem to be that trawling "catches fish, that the line-fishermen might otherwise have taken, in a more expeditious and regular manner." It is the old story: "The old order changeth, giving place to new." Much as the hand-loom in the cottages scattered about the Yorkshire moors and lanes went down before the spinning-jennies and the mills, so the family fishing-boat will disappear before the trawler and the Fishing Company. Only that in the present case the process is rendered doubly hard upon the losers, by the fact that the survival of the fittest is brought about to some extent in the manner in which it was effected in the primeval forests—viz., by "smashing up" the unfittest.

It is impossible to look upon the results of this evolution as an unmixed blessing. The seductive phrases, "food of the people," "progress," and "free trade," fail to make up for the extinction of such a class as the fishermen of our village ports. It is not merely that such men are of immense importance to a maritime nation as a nursery for seamen, and as the first line of our naval reserve; but in this time of luxury and domestic peace, the fishermen are almost the only class who keep up something of the simplicity and courage of older times. Owners of their own boats, they have all the independence of the peasant proprietor, without his narrow and grinding life. Day by day they are accustomed to confront hardship and danger, to look death itself in the face. In the words of one of them, "We often have to fight, taking our lives in our hands, making a living for our families." For such a class to disappear is, in our

opinion, a national calamity. That they will combine and start trawling on their own account is, in their present state of feeling, hopeless; nor would it be possible for those resident in tidal harbours that can only accommodate the smaller class of boats. It is rather to be hoped that the development of the herring-fishing—which has, upon the Scotch coasts at any rate, already taken a good many of the fishermen from the haddock-lines—may furnish employment for some, in event of the general decrease of the inshore fishing. Others may be wanted to man the increasing class of deep-sea liners; while the demands of the richest class of the community for line-caught fish will possibly always give occupation to a certain number.

It is to be feared, however, that the period of change will be one of hardship and its attendant ill feeling; and that although, if we look to "bread alone," the community may benefited, yet that we shall lose the light of many frugal and honest lives. It is true that we shall possess a "cheaper and more regular method of catching fish." At any rate, it is to be hoped that something will be done to put matters on a better footing than they are at present; and it is satisfactory to hear that, in these days of fancy legislation, there is a chance of a bill (for Scotland only) on this important question being brought forward, embodying some of the recommendations of the Commissioners. Whether, in spite of Redistribution of Seats, Supplementary Estimates, Irish members, and the general confusion now prevailing at home and abroad, anything useful will ever become law, is more than the most sanguine man or the most "advanced Liberal" can hope to say.

SUMMER IN THE SOUDAN.

GAKDUL, 20th March, 1885.

EVEN if failure may be fairly said to have marked the first grand stage of our latest African campaign, those who have taken part in it can, with a clear conscience, wash their hands of the blood of the just person they were sent to rescue; for, as a matter of fact, as soon as the route—right or wrong—was decided on, there was absolutely not one day's delay from start to finish.

And such a finish! Exquisitely sad to all, from the general in command to the humblest member of the expedition; and, let us charitably suppose, not without some tinge of sadness to those on whom the terrible weight of the responsibility of the delay and consequent catastrophe must ever lie.

Probably no campaign was ever entered upon, the end of which after an exceedingly short time, was more eagerly longed for by all concerned, though in various degrees.

Longed for, probably, by its commander, who must have always foreseen that a check such as he has experienced would, if its effects were to be counteracted and the *status quo* recovered, inevitably lead to many months of comparative inaction for his troops in one of the most trying climates in the world. Longed for by those who volunteered to take part in it, fondly hoping to have been ere now on their triumphal return home, ready to account to all and sundry the stirring events and incidents, the relation of which becomes so much more lifelike with the pleasing preface of *quorum pars fui*. And, last but not least, longed for by those few who, hav-

ingspent the anxious and uncertain months of last spring and summer in the unsupported Nubian outposts, had hoped that now, at all events, their warfare was accomplished, and that they were not doomed, as is their lot, to pass the burning summer in the rather less risky posts they presently occupy on the line of communications.

That each individual of the small force so unfortunately but necessarily scattered throughout the Soudan should be actuated in different degrees by the same wish, is attributable to various causes, into which it is interesting, as they may be said to be the centre of all interest now, to look.

To commence with their chief. His personal anxiety, above and beyond the mere professional desire to preserve the lives intrusted to him, must be deep and absorbing, and should enlist the sympathy of all, for the task he has in hand—a task of as great, if not greater, difficulty than the one he has failed to accomplish, because of the long period which must now elapse during which his men will have to grapple with the deadly influences of climate and the inevitable ill effects of enforced inaction. And yet, perhaps, "deadly" is hardly the word to employ. Except in one or two places, the climate, for a tropical one, may be called healthy, on account of its excessive dryness. So the struggle between man and his unseen foes may be measured by his ability to resist the burning sun, the distressing sand-storms, and the blasting winds, which will be his portion for the next few months.

It would be an interesting point

for the student of chance to calculate how many out of the forces in the Soudan at the beginning of April will find themselves still there in October. A case, truly, of the survival of the fittest?

Passing from the first on the list, we come to a *posse* of elderly and respectable general officers and colonels—most of them married men with families—far more fitted to adorn their respective stations, whether military or social, at home, than to pass in comparative idleness the trying ordeal of the next few months. Then come the band of warriors who, prompted by love of novelty or of active service, hurried out to the scenes they would now perhaps not unwillingly exchange for the more varied excitements of the London season and the flesh-pots of Pall Mall. That they have deserved well of their country, and done work equal to and possibly greater than, any performance even of our armies of bygone days, is gratifying to them and to all; let us hope that the reminiscences of their good deeds will serve to temper the wind of May and June to these shorn lambs. Then, again, there are the few who, having already borne the burden and heat of 1884, are doomed to another summer a few hundred miles farther south, and who in some ways are more to be pitied than their comrades, as they remember only too well the full force of that scorching heat which is already advancing upon them with rapid strides.

In connection with this, it may be stated that the average maximum and minimum temperatures along the Nile from Korti northwards to Sarras for the first three weeks of March, were in the shade 91.14° and 60.4° respectively—the maximum and minimum readings being 99° and 48°. A steady daily

increase is observable, only interrupted by an occasional two days' hurricane, during the first day of which the thermometer rises considerably; but on the second, the sun being obscured as in a London fog by the dust-laden air, the actual reading is lower, an advantage entirely counterbalanced by the choking and suffocating sensation induced by the inhaling for forty-eight hours of this visible and tangible substance. Nothing but a well-built house, with closely fitting windows, and *kuskus* grass tatties, kept continually wet, as in India, supplying the place of doors, would afford any protection against this evil; and as even in Lower Egypt such contrivances are unknown, they cannot be looked for in the Soudan, where, indeed, for mats of that description, &c., no suitable grass or fibre can be found. Moreover, our troops are not in houses, and, owing to the scarcity of material for building, are not likely to be so accommodated.

The discomforts of the gale while it lasts cannot certainly be exaggerated. Business becomes almost impossible, though for the first few hours a little writing may be accomplished by the substitution of the pencil for the pen. Eating in the open is out of the question; and, with tent-doors closed, the rapid rise of temperature makes it equally distasteful there. In fact, men and animals alike make up their minds to passive resistance and inaction, as, huddled together under rocks or trees, with veils over their heads, they await with patience(?), like Norwegian ponies, with their tails turned towards a storm, the subsidence of the wind.

The true value, however, of the gale—which, from the tone of this article, it may rightly be inferred is raging at this moment of writing

—is to be found on the morning following, when the miseries of the past two days are partially compensated by a short period of comparative coolness, after which the heat, like a giant refreshed, comes on more rapidly than ever (the temporary lull seeming to be only *reculer pour mieux sauter*).

And now that several thousands of our countrymen are committed to spending a summer on the Nile—a pleasant-sounding term, in which, however, there is more than meets the eye—let us consider what can be done to mitigate its severity.

Those whose term of similar punishment commenced at an earlier date than that of most of their fellow-sufferers—viz., this time last year—may be credited with a certain amount of personal experience on the subject, and probably found in the Soudan, as indeed in all tropical climates, that, of all antidotes against the foe, shelter, clothes, and food for body and mind, are the most important to be considered. As regards the first, Sir Samuel Baker is of opinion that the native contrivances of mud-walls, mats, and palm-branches are the best, and he emphatically pronounces against any attempt to live in boats or upon the water. It may be presumptuous to go against such a first-class authority, but there can be no doubt that the friendly refuge of a *dahabiah* during a sand-storm is not to be despised; and probably, on some parts of the line of communication, rafts thoroughly well sheltered by grass-mats might be used advantageously—at all events for the sick, and especially for eye cases, of which a large number may be expected. In the neighbourhood of a cataract, however still the day on shore may be, there is always a ghost of a breeze on the water; and

a system of mats all round the raft, while not of a sufficient mass to keep out the wind, would obviate the glare, which is a painful accompaniment of sun on the water. The principal difficulty of raft-making would be a want of proper wood for the purpose—palm, which is the only available large timber, being spongy, and possessing no buoyancy whatever. On shore nothing probably is better than well-built huts, composed either exclusively of grass-mats, or with walls on the three sunny sides; the fourth side—having a northern exposure, from which point the wind blows six days out of seven—being composed of mats, which, with plenty of palm-leaves, should form a double roof. These mats, of course, while affording no protection against, but rather serving to admit the scorching wind, will to a certain extent mitigate and break its intensity; and though an actually lower temperature may be obtained by mud-walls and exclusion of air, it is a question if this is more wholesome or less unbearable than the fresher and natural though more ardent heat. In most of the stations where our troops will be, there is a good deal of natural shade from trees and rocks. At Dal, for instance, we noticed that the commandant had, by excavating under the shade of a precipitous rock, been able to pitch a *lashkar-pal* tent so far in the shade that the sun never touched one side at all, while upon the other it never descended in direct rays. Probably few places possessing such natural advantages could be found—and of course later on, when the sun is higher in the zenith, nothing short of an overhanging rock would afford shelter from the more vertical rays; but the system of excavating several feet under either tents or huts makes a very great

congratulated on the peculiarities of an enemy who, up to now, has never interfered with their arrangements. That his unaccountable inaction may continue is much to be desired; for any adequate means of protection, without very largely increasing the number of the troops, are out of the question.

Had it not been for the catastrophe which closed so abruptly the first part of the campaign, the labours of those engaged just now would have been stimulated by the thought that any extra exertion tended to hasten the movement home; and though every one's services are rendered willingly enough, no doubt the worst effect of this has been largely felt. Still the inevitable has to be faced in as cheery a light as possible, and, with the example of General Gordon so fresh in the memory of all, com-

plaining would seem more of place. With him it is said knight-errantry is for the last two centuries no work like his. His inexhaustible energy and untold resource in a climate like this, strike upon the minds of people in the more vividly than can be the case at home, where the fell influence of inertia caused by many months' residence in an enervating atmosphere, and amid depressing surroundings, cannot be fully appreciated. But enough and to spare must have been said and written by now upon this subject, and all such praise, even from those who at home by words and abroad by deeds have done their best to save him, must sound but poor and faint beside the welcome "Well done!" which has greeted him on that mysterious shore.

have alike distinguished themselves, and, according to their individual proclivities, have robbed the public store. Strange indeed at first must have been the taste of those hitherto unknown delicacies to the dwellers on the banks of the Nile ; but now, probably no article, from pickles to permanganate of potash, comes amiss ; while the head-man of any village from Halfa to Dongola who cannot produce to any casual friend a pot of jam or tin of cocoa, is indeed unworthy to have spent six months in the immediate track of the Nile flotilla. Certainly the native was slightly, and somewhat unfairly, handicapped at first, as he had not the advantage of being able to read outside the lid of each medical-comfort box the enticing list of wines and delicacies within, which information was so thoughtfully provided as light reading for the soldiers in charge. Now, however, he is as well acquainted with the appearance of these neat little cases as are any of the Commissariat department themselves,—the innocent members of which fraternity speak with righteous indignation of the dishonesty of the natives, and the hardships their peculations inflict upon the already prematurely well-lined stomachs of the Commissariat and of Thomas Atkins. That much of this speculation took place in far higher latitudes than Nubia has long been thought probable ; and the skilful way in which some of the boxes have been opened from the bottom, defying all detection till an examination of their contents has been made, points to a higher class of culprit having been in many cases engaged than the British soldier or any other member of the Nile expeditionary force. To such a pass have things lately come, that forwarding these boxes—as also cases

of jam, milk, and bags of sugar—has become a farce, and inspections at various points on the line of communications have been made which prove that not more than 10 per cent of these boxes remain intact ; while, to preserve the uniformity of weight, the deficiencies have been made up by stones and sand in place of jam and sugar—water or sand in place of wine. The conviction of theft by Egyptian soldiers or by natives has been visited with the summary punishment of flogging, while our soldiers have been awarded long terms of imprisonment and penal servitude : the former penalty being swift, and example salutary ; while in the latter cases, the many weeks of waiting for confirmation of sentence has made it of little or no deterrent effect, and the consequence to the culprit is probably ruin for life. The force, too, is deprived of the offender's services (which are proportionately valuable according to the distance he happens to have advanced), unless, indeed, he is fortunate enough to arrive at home in time for the jubilee of jail-birds—the latest device announced for the proposed increase of the army.

But *recueillir à nos moutons*, or rather oxen, for beef is just now the staple article of food. At present the supply is good and wholesome ; but as our troops along the Nile consume about 750 beasts a-month, we cannot look forward with any certainty to the supply, unless augmented in some way, lasting three months longer. And how is it to be augmented ? As the hot weather advances, the wells dry up, and the desert forms an impenetrable barrier to cattle arriving from Kordofan and the markets of the south, while bovine typhus is making its appearance among the live stock from the

north. As sheep are an inappreciable item, nothing will remain but "bully-beef," which, though palatable enough by judicious management in the present comparatively cool weather, is neither wholesome nor inviting when eaten in a temperature of 130° in the shade. "Thoroughly cool the tin" are the mocking instructions which then will meet the eye; and it is to be feared the "resources of civilisation," as known in the Soudan, will hardly serve the occasion. Vegetables at present are pretty plentiful at many stations, remarkably so at Dongola, but their reign does not long survive the advent of the burning winds; so, taken as a whole, the culinary horizon may be said to be obscured. Farther south, indeed, among the flesh-pots of Khartoum, the troops would have been better off, and even the possession of Berber would have ensured a good supply of food for the force which occupied it.

The chances, however, of an advance in that direction are now, unfortunately, small; and though the various posts along the line may be called upon to defend themselves from attacks of hostile bands during the summer, it is improbable that serious fighting will take place before the autumn. The frequent wells, hitherto unknown to us, which have already been accidentally lighted upon, point to the probable existence of many more, which, though insufficient for the supply of a large force of men or convoys of cattle and camels, would still be enough to enable small bands of mobile Arabs to harass us uncomfortably during the next few months. The advocates of an advance, though mostly to be found among the cushioned scribes at home, argue truly enough

that our troops during the Mutiny fought well under a burning Indian sun; and so they did: but it must be remembered that that was in a country fairly well supplied with water, and a veritable garden compared with the howling waste which is now the arena of war. Our warriors, too, at that period, though animated by no better spirit than that which took our men lately to Metammeh and Kerbeka and back again, were nevertheless of a more lasting and a harder stamp—men impervious to fatigue, and who bore up against the terrible heat of that ever-memorable campaign with the enduring patience of seasoned veterans. That this cannot be said (all the same, it certainly will be said, although not the case) with regard to our present generation of soldiers, admits of no doubt; and, were proof necessary, a glance hereafter at the medical returns of the next few months will probably show the invaliding home of men suffering from no wound or traceable ailment, but merely from debility engendered by over-exertion and unwonted hardships.

The possible advance of General Brackenbury's column to Abu Hamed was another move that commended itself to many, especially if it could have preceded a further advance on Berber, and a junction there with a force from Korti; but the obstacles to river navigation became more and more apparent, while the impossibility of manœuvring boats in dangerous water in an openly hostile country was, fortunately, never practically demonstrated.

Want of troops may have been at the bottom of the double retreat from Metammeh and Birti; but more troops means more camels, —and that has been, and will be,

one of the greatest difficulties of the campaign. Although, therefore, every one's wishes at home and abroad tend to a resumption of hostilities, with the possible result of delivering a part of the force a little sooner from their present predicament, it is improbable that any such attempt will be made; while the appearance on the scene of the Sheikh Marghani, taken with other minor incidents, points rather to the possibility of a more diplomatic and less warlike solution.

Having failed to rescue, it is not unnatural to consider whether it may not be advisable to retire.

A step in the right direction, to facilitate either of these manœuvres is being taken in the extension of the present line of railway from near Ambigol on to Akasha. This will have the advantage of turning the now almost impassable cataracts of Akasha and Tanjar, thus leaving the boats, ascending with stores and descending with sick, the three remaining cataracts of Dal, Kajbar, and Hannek to contend with. The first is long and arduous; the second shorter, but crooked and dangerous; while that of Hannek may be said to extend now, more or less, over twelve or fourteen miles. These formidable barriers are alike an obstacle to the stores, which pass up in one continuous stream, and to the sick and wounded, who are now coming down in average numbers of about thirty every week. This short bit of rail, under forty miles, will, it is calculated, take almost four months to complete: there are one or two hard cuttings to get through, and the difficulty about platelayers is great. If natives are employed, only skilled labourers from Lower Egypt would be of any use—and these, with the Suakin demand to

be met, are very scarce; while the employment of Europeans is undesirable, owing to the great exposure of the back to the sun, entailed by the constant stooping posture, and the necessity of wearing gloves to handle the heated iron. While executing similar work in some parts of India, each European is attended by a native carrying an umbrella; and it is a pity that nothing more has lately been heard of a consignment for the front of 2000 of these homely but useful articles—unless, indeed, they are being replaced by the patent Japanese shade about which accounts have lately appeared in the London papers.

The Egyptian soldier,—that willing and most useful adjunct to the expedition, without whose assistance and co-operation the English army would, with average luck, have reached by this time as far south as, perhaps, Dongola or Debbah,—is again at work upon this railway, and, to the astonishment of his taskmasters, easily completes an eight hour task in about half the allotted time, those who finish first crowding round their fellows and jeering at the extra time they take; still this is not skilled labour, and the want of that will soon be seriously felt. As regards the greater undertaking of the Suakin-Berber line, it can hardly be doubted that the honest opinion of any expert connected with that work will put down the date of its probable completion at somewhat nearer twelve than six months hence. The extension and establishment of the Nile railway, as opposed to the Suakin-Berber line, would meet with general approval in Egypt, where it is argued that the laying down of the latter would simply anni-

hilate the river-trade, and, in a short time, lead to the total extinction of the various races who compose the population along the banks of the Nile. That the blow to commerce, with which one usually associates progress and civilisation, is to be deprecated, is undeniable; but after much and careful study of the people interested, it is hard to say how their disappearance from the scene would seriously affect the general interests of mankind.

If, however, they should be doomed to disappear, the last representatives of the race will have the satisfaction of knowing that they have witnessed a panorama on a scale never yet produced, and, what is much more in their line, that their pockets have been filled by fair means, by robbery and extortion, to an extent of which their more simple forefathers could never have even dreamt. And what scenes have been enacted on this mysterious river of theirs, in which so many of our men have found a watery grave!—scenes which must ever remain present to the memory of both actors and spectators, though to many the quick succession of events has almost obliterated each succeeding incident. The few weeks of hurried preparations while stations were being formed, and commanders and staff on the line of communications were being posted, although an all-important period, were as a lull before the storm compared with the rush which followed. It was during that lull, in the months of September and October, that, had a little more warning of what was required been given, and had a few more native boats been ready and camel transport provided, the great and what might have been fatal crush which followed would have been

to a great extent mitigated; moreover, the pressure which might fairly have been expected to paralyse (though it fortunately failed to do so) the various authorities in charge of cataracts up the river, could have been thereby lessened or avoided.

While man did all he could, Nature would sometimes shirk her part; and the frequent failure of the strong north wind, so essential to the progress of the whalers, multiplied a hundredfold the labour of those concerned, and seriously retarded the concentration of the force at Debbeh and Korti. Few people who thus saw and shared in the strain put upon our soldiers in will readily forget that time. The toils accomplished and the difficulties overcome should increase our self-respect; and though wiser heads than those who planned it foretold disaster, and pointed out the more practical means to further the end in view, yet even the partial accomplishment of such an undertaking—after eliminating its melodramatic element—may claim a certain precedence in the achievements of the century.

If the chronicle of the campaign is ever written—and with such a legion of correspondents at the scene of war one may fairly expect this to be done—it will be curious to note whether the importance of the bravely fought actions at Abu Klea and Metammeh, or the extraordinary and successful organisation of the 1500 miles of communication is submitted to the consideration of posterity as the greater feature of the campaign. It may be said that battles have been fought before; but certainly never in the annals of warfare has the fighting force been supplied in such a manner. On a navigable river this would

have meant comparatively little ; on the Nile, only those who have seen it will comprehend the gigantic nature of the task. One advantage of the long and narrow line—the only means of communicating with the front—is, that it has multiplied our force a hundred-fold, numerically, in the natives' estimation. As the boats came trooping up during the latter months of the year, supplemented by sundry camel-corps by land, the influx of men must have seemed to them interminable; while the daily sight of 100 odd whalers and numerous native craft, now employed on convoy of stores and ammunition between Akasha and Hannek, must greatly increase their ideas of our resources. Since the troops ceased passing up, the scenes have altered greatly. Ambigol and Dal were about the longest portage, the distance from point of landing to that of re-embarking varying as the river fell, and new cataracts and rapids were developed. The distance which had to be traversed was in each of these cases about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles ; and looking down from any of the hills which surround the fortunately flat portage across the desert at Dal, the spectacle was very striking. Small gangs of men,—sometimes native, sometimes English—each lot representing the contents (some sixty packages) of a whaler,—might be seen, nearly all day long, while boats were arriving, following each other at intervals of half an hour. Each man carried a box or sack, and about four halts were made *en route*. During these, it must be confessed, robberies were frequent: the bearer, scorched by the sun and blinded with the dust, would throw his burden angrily down ; the case would break, and to his admiring gaze would be unfolded

the hidden treasures of jam, pickles, cocoa, &c., for which a pretty general scramble at once took place. Effectual supervision was next to impossible, as the commandant, with his limited and overworked staff, was engaged from long before sunrise, and often far into the night, in the work of organisation at either end of the cataract. Looking down at them from a height, these fatigue-parties resembled batches of gigantic ants ; while occasionally the great white form of an upturned whale-boat moved mysteriously along the plain, and, surrounded by the shuffling crowd of sixty, who, with only one halt, took it across to the head of the cataract, resembled some huge shell or hive borne aloft by its inhabitants. Of these some twenty-four, during a week of dead calm, had to be portaged across at Dal ; after that, by the selection of picked crews from the soldiers of each company passing through, and with the aid of some sixty Canadians under Lieut.-Col. Alleyne and Lord Avonmore, the boats, after unloading, were sailed and pulled up the rapids at the rate of twenty to thirty a-day. It was, indeed, chiefly due to the skill and exertions of the former officer that a serious block, at one time anticipated through the rapid subsidence of the river at Dal, did not take place ; while the untiring energy and great resource of the late Lord Avonmore, and the hearty co-operation of Colonel Burnaby, who was at that time District Inspector, were of the utmost assistance to Colonel Trotter, the then commandant, in maintaining unchecked the constant flow of troops and stores through that important station.

At the time, however, of which we speak, the action of command-

ants was not hampered nor their attention engaged by arrangements for the sick, which now demand the greatest attention, and are a source, in the present dangerous and unnavigable condition of the river, of much anxiety.

It must be a satisfaction to those at home to feel that no effort is spared along the line to facilitate the transport and lessen the discomfort of the wounded and sick going north. At present they are leaving Korti in considerable numbers, and their passage is easy and simple for some 150 miles down the river; then the cataracts and inevitable portaging begin again, and the men who a few months ago were engaged all day in the long struggle up the stream, now revisit the scenes of their labour under very different conditions. In convoys of from twenty to thirty, under a medical officer, of whom there are not too many, they start in whalers from the foot of the cataract at Hannek, and in a day, or a day and a half, they arrive at Kajbar. There tents and grass-huts close to the river are provided for their reception, into which the lying-down cases are at once conveyed by fatigue-parties with stretchers ready on the shore; meals are cooked, wounds dressed, and if another whale-boat convoy is ready at the foot of the cataract, and there is daylight sufficient for the move, only a few hours' halt is made, and the journey north continued. Those who are able to walk get over the distance—about a mile—on foot; the others are carried on stretchers, or on mules and cacolets, the baggage of all being conveyed on camels. About five ordinary or two lying-down cases go in each boat; coverings are provided, though at present not much re-

quired; and notwithstanding the inevitable discomfort, the minimum of grumbling is to be heard. Of course, after the transport across the desert from Gakdúl and further south, the river journey is a pleasant change; and it is satisfactory to observe that, even in the worst cases of wounds, the pain occasioned by portage from head to foot of cataract is very slight. Occasionally when the health of the men has deteriorated *en route*, they are transferred to the station hospital; but the keen desire of all being to get on, the disappointment caused by such an arrangement is held to counterbalance the advantage, and the change is seldom made.

At Dal the same routine is again gone through; but the portage being longer, the invalids have to be portaged, generally on mules and cacolets, the whole distance. At Akasha the whale-boat transport ceases; and another desert march—which is comfortably arranged—of two short days takes place. The railway is now reached, which deposits its burden within a few yards of Surgeon-Major Will's admirably managed hospital, where, in addition to all that can be done for them by the doctors, they have the advantage of the Sisters' skilful care.

Simultaneously with sick going down in the empty returning whalers, the full convoys coming south, with a few camels by land, and scores of native craft by water, keep up the unceasing flow of rations, medical and ordnance stores. Thus all is still bustle and activity along the line, and with working hours modified by the great heat, will continue so to be for the summer months; the force guarding the communications and its commander being alike to be

congratulated on the peculiarities of an enemy who, up to now, has never interfered with their arrangements. That his unaccountable inaction may continue is much to be desired ; for any adequate means of protection, without very largely increasing the number of the troops, are out of the question.

Had it not been for the catastrophe which closed so abruptly the first part of the campaign, the labours of those engaged just now would have been stimulated by the thought that any extra exertion tended to hasten the movement home ; and though every one's services are rendered willingly enough, no doubt the worst effect of this has been largely felt. Still the inevitable has to be faced in as cheery a light as possible, and, with the example of General Gordon so fresh in the memory of all, com-

plaining would seem more than out of place. With him it may be said knight-errantry is at an end, for the last two centuries show no work like his. His inexhaustible energy and untold resource in a climate like this, strike upon the minds of people in the Soudan more vividly than can be the case at home, where the fell influence of inertia caused by many months' residence in an enervating temperature, and amid depressing surroundings, cannot be fully appreciated. But enough and to spare must have been said and written by now upon this subject, and all such praise, even from those who at home by words and abroad by deeds have done their best to save him, must sound but poor and faint beside the the welcome "Well done!" which has greeted him on that mysterious shore.

LONDON IN MAY.

WE will not begin, as is usual, by a doleful discussion of the difference between the May of the poets and that to which we are accustomed in these later days. For whatever the pessimists may say—and there are no greater slanders spoken than those which are current in respect to our English climate—May is still often sweet enough to justify all the pretty things that have been said of her. There are adverse seasons, no doubt, in which a succession of leaden days, without colour or life, turn all our anticipations into foolishness; but these, at the worst, are broken by now and then a glimpse of heaven, a sudden lifting of the cloudy curtain and shining of the hidden countenance which had been ready to beam upon us all the time, had fate and the clouds permitted. But those who have seen the coast of the Riviera all blurred and dulled out of its warmer life, and beheld the deadliest chill, more heart-searching than any northern cold, which can settle upon Rome, and seen the rain pouring down into the canals of Venice, and felt the Tramontana sweep through the deep streets of Florence, have little reason to speak evil of English skies and the moods of the English season. It would be treason to nature to say anything else than that the full delights of May belong to the country, where the trees have all shaken out their freshest green, and everything grows and flourishes visibly, so that we can see the subtle process carried on before our very eyes. The woods alive with conscious life; the wealth of the primroses going off in the south, but in the

north, still scattering handfuls of delight under all the trees, and succeeded by the blue of the wild hyacinths; the rich sheets of green and delicate stars of the wood-anemone; with the young foliage fluttering in the soft breezes, throwing tender masses of green between us and the sky, in a harmony which art has never been able to emulate, though even the Philistine no longer is bold enough to assert, as once he did, that blue and green cannot go together; the air all musical with birds, and sweet with lilac and hawthorn, and every shrub that flowers—what combination can equal these? What though the wind may blow a little shrewdly of nights, our hardly English blossoms fear it little; and neither pomegranate nor oleander are worthy to be named before the rosy loveliness of an apple-orchard, the sheets of delicate bloom that clothe our midland levels in the flowery promise of May.

It would be reasonable, if reason had anything to do with the matter, no doubt, to spend this blooming season in the country, and enjoy the sweetest portion of the year among the sights and sounds which make it the most sweet—as it is always reasonable in the abstract that human society should collect in towns for the winter, and indemnify itself for the loss of daylight and warmth by a closer drawing together within doors, and such pleasures of the interior as may make up for the want of attraction abroad. But on the other hand there is much to be said for the artificial rules which turn nature upside-down, so far as this is concerned. For London in May

is assuredly better, more endurable for those who dislike it, more delightful for those who love it, in the beginning of summer, which is also the beginning of the season, than at any other time of the year. It is no caprice of fashion, but a sound judgment, which guides the stream away from town in the dark autumnal days when London, to all save those who in every season prefer her almost to Paradise, is a kind of Pandemonium lying under low skies of deepest grey, the outlines of her houses, the spectres of her trees, marked out in Indian ink against the dark background, with sometimes the incident of a fog no longer grey, but yellow, to vary the scene; a sun looking in from time to time pale, without strength enough in him to restore a little colour to the surroundings—or red, like a great globe of fire amid the lurid clouds. St. James's Park is a pretty scene in a summer morning; but in November it is all Indian ink, the gleam of the water giving that tone of whitish reflection which is the highest light possible—the trees standing out in deepest gloom—the ghosts of Westminster falling off pale in the distance—the greater and darker silhouette of Buckingham Palace, on the other hand, in unmitigated blackness against the sky. The misty distance in the streets, and the yellow tones that are so often in the air, give a kind of weird poetry to the most commonplace scenes; but it is distracting to live in this perpetual shadow, to feel that there is no more light than this to be hoped for day after day, and that the only variety probable is the enwrapping veil of a fog which will isolate every house from its fellows, and make the best-accustomed Londoner lose his way at mid-day on the most familiar pavements. There are thousands

who like it, let us not attempt to deny,—who hug themselves, poor wretches! in their blindness, and declare that town is most delightful when the agitations of the season are still afar—when man has his club and woman her drawing-room to themselves and their friends—when the dinners are friendliest and the play at its best, and there is no compulsion upon any one to look at pictures or listen to music save at his own will and pleasure. Genial no-season! which the devotees love—but for us who prefer to see the sun most days of our lives, and breathe something else than fog, and love a landscape which has colour in it not attainable by Indian ink, a doleful period, scarcely to be redeemed by any social delights.

Therefore, we repeat, there is reason in the seeming caprice which draws the world, even from the country in its sweetest bloom, to town in May. For if we are to make a point of town at all, it is well to do it when town is at its best; and this is at the time when all the world is at its best—when the fog-demon is most under control, and the air cannot choose but be sweet, nor the sun refuse to shine—by times at least. Then those trees, which once were of Indian ink, accomplish a miracle and grow green, as if they lived in parks and woods out of the din of men. And all the squares and openings, in which London is so rich, have heard the sound of the spring. The parks stretch out gay as if there was no end to them, shaking out of their husks millions of fluttering leaves, casting dancing shadows upon Piccadilly and the cabs as if it was a road through a wood; spreading carpets of green under the foot, and making of Rotten Row a *fete*

champetre which Watteau would not have despised. Nature and Art put on their finest costumes at the same moment; and the ladies come out, like the trees, in all that is new and bright. Colour! the air is full of it. The balconies are all alight with flowers. If you turn into the dull-est street of yellow-brickness, of shabby shutters and doors, the shabby scene turns into a picture, from the brilliant centre afforded by that high priest of Art and Nature the costermonger, with his cart full of flowers—which throws up all the lesser tones, and forms in a moment an artistic composition of which an Academician might be glad to make use. And not only the parks, the squares, the balconies, and the costermongers' carts, but every back-garden, generally so hopeless, has a hint of what is going on, and makes its effort with a bit of pale lilac or a faint laburnum to echo in. In May all the means that Nature has at hand come into play. The lilacs scent the very streets; the chestnut builds its milky turrets of blossom; the very hawthorn blooms, so that you are aware of it from one square to another for miles of crowded ways.

Therefore let us pronounce that Fashion is right, as she is from time to time, notwithstanding all that can be said to the contrary. Now and then, even in May, there will come a dim day—alas! sometimes many dim days; sometimes it will rain—but May rain is sweet and makes everything better after, which is not the case with later showers. And if you abrogate for this particular occasion the new style which is no longer new, and secretly going back to the old which is forgotten, make your May begin in the middle of the month, you will do all the

better. We do not speak, it must be remarked, for those to whom London and the season are habitual, who come when it begins, and remain till it ends, and are unconscious of the existence of people who have not a town house, and can even exist from year to year without a season at all. Dear brethren of the country, it is to you we address ourselves—you who come for a month, or perhaps for a fortnight, to see the pictures, as you say modestly, to see the world—you whose friends live in South Kensington, or even perhaps in Russell Square, who know but little of Belgravia, whose hearts beat a little higher when you are asked to go to Grosvenor Place to see the fine folk coming from the Derby, or are recognised as you stroll along the Row by some party riding in that beatific enclosure. The Row itself is naturally one of the first places to which you will go, to see, as the foreigner says, the most beautiful women, on the finest horses, under the noblest trees in the world. Perhaps the trees are scarcely worthy of this high praise; but the beautiful creatures that prance, and toss their fine heads, and jingle their harness, and reflect in their shining coats the morning sun, are not to be surpassed; and the still more beautiful creatures that ride them, in that sobriety of garb which enhances every charm, with their dainty waists, their coils of shining hair, their English bloom, it would be strange if we were not proud of them—and prouder still to think, that in their perfection they are no more than the swætest commonplace of English life. For whether the girls ride, with all that luxury and wealth can do to make their simplicity a perfect work of art—or whether they walk,

looking on with an innocent envy in their eyes which has no sharpness in it,—or whether, outside those golden gates, they are making their way along in all the quiet absorption of something to do—to learn or to teach, to work for those they love, or to carry help and hope to the needy—they are all as pleasant to behold,—no better things or sweeter under the sun of May. Old jokes last long, and gibes are apt to pass into traditions, but the *Anglaise pour rire*, who still flourishes on the French stage and in French satire, is not to be seen either in Rotten Row or anywhere else where ladies abound. The riding-habit was always English in its dainty severity of line and absence of every unnecessary adjunct; but the morning-dress of young Englishwomen partakes in some degree of the same character, with a national reticence, restraint, and moderation in ornament, which shows that even in the realm of fashion France has not everything her own way. This we dare to say, in defiance even of Mr Oscar Wilde and of all the absurd suggestions which people who have nothing better to do are so fond of making. Barring the protuberance behind, an everlasting feminine folly which is beyond all remonstrance, and which doubtless has some exquisite reason, did we but know it, the well-dressed English girl at the present moment wears apparel which is both graceful and natural, and in which there is little to improve.

The sight of these pretty dresses and pretty faces is the chief charm in Rotten Row, where people go to lounge, and chatter to their friends—to see the notabilities go by, great statesmen and small, and people with noble names, and people with ignoble ones, who owe their notoriety, perhaps, to vulgar wealth, perhaps to shame,—but

chiefly to see the stream of faces, the varieties of pretty costume, which have come fresh—faces especially, which are important—from country air hours, and have kept themselves fresh and fair as country could; them in the town. How pretty the groups look as we go by in the stream! Under this tree, in its tender green, a little company: a smiling matron or two, a man who halts as he passes to pay his duty, helpless, stick in hand, and moustache on lip, not brilliant in conversation,—and round about a little crowd of girls, swept by some eddy, as it were, into this shelter, measuring with their keen bright eyes everything that passes, whether it be a new dress more fantastic than the rest, or a new beauty, or a philosopher, or a Guardsman. There are groups that are fast, and there are groups that are vulgar: but where we pause, the ladies, you may be sure, are neither. If there is malice in their criticisms, it is spelt the French way, and innocent of bitterness; they speak low and clear with the delicious intonation which no school-master can teach, and with a grace which is the *fine fleur* of education, yet cannot be acquired—which is one of the long results of time, the inheritance of generations generously bred. The soft and gracious manners, which are simplicity itself, yet the outcome of so much unconscious cultivation, are one of the most beautiful things in society. They come to some who have had no training at all, nor any ancestors behind them, by gift of nature, like any other kind of genius; but ordinarily belong to those who by nature have the best right to them, the descendants of well-bred people for generations. This is the peculiar charm of these groups. It runs a little

to a fashionable haw-haw in the men, who ought to have something better to do than to stride or lounge along in their thousands, but who are notwithstanding, in dress, in looks, in absolute freshness and perfection of appearance, almost more wonderful than the ladies. For they are not so innocent in their dissipations as the ladies. They are up half the night; they smoke innumerable cigarettes, and indulge in strange liquids; yet turn out, or are turned out, in the morning, without a trace of harm, or an odour, or anything to show that their consciences are not as perfect as their linen—which is saying much,—or as the faultless lines of trouser—which is saying more.

And what a stream of conversation there is! how gay, how animated, how much and how little! There is no more commonplace witticism than to talk of London as a village. Those who use the word mean to be funny—mean to express the delightful confusion of a bigness which is beyond calculation with the smallness of jocular familiarity. But it is not so silly a simile as it looks. He who said it first was perhaps a profound social philosopher, and not one of the frivolous or flippant. For as you pass along slowly from group to group, or are carried away by a wave of the ebbing and flowing stream, the murmurs that reach your ear will remind you of nothing so much as the talk of the village coteries—the little world that circles round some dozen houses on the green. You will catch echoes of some domestic incident, repeated from one crowd to another with anxious or with laughing comments. You will hear of it till you think you are yourself qualified to judge whether Charley So-and-So was bullied or beguiled into *that* marriage; and

till you begin to think it is your duty to form an opinion whether Lady Jane actually ran away from her husband, and was stopped and brought back—or whether she only intended to run away,—or if, in fact, it was her father the Duke who took her away, declaring that his daughter should submit no longer to conduct which no lady should endure. Perhaps you imagined those soft and lovely ladies, those exquisitely - got - up young men, would talk of matters more exquisite and like the fine quintessence of humanity which you find in them. But they are not proud; they are not superior to flesh and blood. Their voices have nothing in them of the music of the spheres. And though this is the world, according to one formula, in another, the silly one, which is in a way the profound one, it is a village—a repetition of the little microcosm, which, in its way is also a world.

But as a spectacle there is no prettier scene. The sunshine flickers through the trees, and the shadows fall and play upon the prettiest heads, the prettiest bonnets, the most perfectly well-cared-for, well-conditioned, well-bred of human creatures. There is something in English flesh and blood which shows the perfection of these external circumstances more than any other nationality. The darker and more impassioned beauty of the southern races, the keener outlines and quicker movements of the French, the muddier fairness and heavier form of the Germans, show less, to our eyes at least, that perfect physical perfection, unspeakable cleanness, freshness, and carefulness of all personal properties, which distinguish the English race. The southerners, perhaps, carry finery better, and may possess a more

subtle perception of what is and is not practicable in the way of ornament, especially in the lower classes, which are superior to ours in this particular in almost every respect. But that air of perfect personal purity, the absence of anything that is soiled, or crumpled, or less than complete, is nowhere so universal. Look at these young men half-a-dozen abreast (which perhaps is less than perfect politeness demands in a thoroughfare running over with women), there is not a speck, a crease, or even a suspicion of a crease or speck, in all their raiment of price. They are clean to distraction, and fresh as the May, yet as easy as if they were in the oldest clothes, and as little self-denying or disposed to do without their favourite indulgences for the sake of appearances as any costermonger. The ladies are scarcely so wonderful, for they have less temptation and less likelihood of rubbing of the down of perfect bloom; but the men who are no better than other men, or, as the gracious mother in her seat under that tree, who has just been shedding upon them the sunshine of a maternal smile, will tell you, with a shake of her head, perhaps much worse—how do they keep themselves up to that mark of physical perfection? It is not the fashion to conceal any peccadilloes, or to give themselves out as better than they are. They are like their horses, who keep much better hours, and smoke no cigarettes: is it the grooming in both cases,—the perfection of the valet rather than the master? The question is difficult to answer: but it is certain that the watery eye and shaking hand, which in a different class betray so quickly the infraction of natural laws, show not in this, or only after years have strained the strength and exhaust-

ed the reservoirs of youthful vigour. It is unpleasant to speak of men and women in the same terms which we employ in discussing the less privileged but often much more respectable animals which add in their proportion to the beauty of this scene. But these are in reality the most fit terms to use. Heart and soul are harder things to judge of, and do no show in those gay interchanges of the surface talk of society; but in the aspect of the young men and women who crowd the spectator out, and sweep him away, there is a perfection of everything physical, which raises the same kind of admiration with which we look at the horses. Nothing more splendid in the production and exhibition of the human animal has ever been. To see how perfect it can be, how easily it can carry trappings, and to what a high pitch of physical discipline it can be brought, there is nothing like Rotten Row in May.

The old are not so happy. It is indeed in the presence of all this physical perfection that it becomes least agreeable to grow old; and the contempt of the light literature and lighter talk, for everything past its prime, finds justification. What terrible old faces look out upon us from lace and feathers under those canopies of spring!—faces only to be paralleled in the lowest slums, with eyes red with spent passions, with the fever of a forced renunciation, with the habits still all inappropriate to the age of peace. But on the other hand, here and there, what a lovely old lady, more sought and courted, more gay, than her grandchildren,—sweet with surroundings, of old friendship and the tender worship of the new—a fragile figure, that is still “up to everything,” and bright old eyes that still can smile when all the young ones are dim with sleep and weary

with pleasure, being delivered, by very reason of their slight hold upon life, from life's weaknesses,—from the need of slumber, and food, and rest, which the more substantial require ! More than one such can we see, in our mind's eye, poised upon the furthest boundary of time, with one foot, not in the grave, as the harsh critic says, but on some cloud that limits the visible, and is the way to heaven. Old but fair, with those softest, pearly, ashy tints, which betray what is not so much decay as change into something more ethereal than ordinary flesh and blood—with long treasures of the past behind, remembering everybody one has heard of for the last half-century; but the door of her heart so lightly hung, so sensitive to every touch, that the youngest stranger may come in and find a tender welcome ; never weary, never dull, never too much occupied with herself. Some such old ladies form the sweetest, centres of society. You will see them under the trees as light, swift-moving, ready of interest, as any child : knowing everything, forgetting everything, with a grace which endears old age as it endears childhood, and nothing at all of that sense of judging, that quick and irritable criticism and comparison which so often separate middle age from youth. There is here and there an old man to be met with in society, who is nearly but not quite as charming,—who is a little retired by reason perhaps of some slight veil of infirmity which falls between him and the world—whose approval is more weighty, but whose sympathy perhaps is not so universal—who is more conscious of the gaps and emptiness in life than of its continual interest, yet who keeps still sufficient hold upon his fellow-creatures to love to see them, and

take a little sympathetic share in their pleasures, and give them a sanction, a kind of benediction not in words, for his sense of humor is keen by his presence. Perhaps it is because we ask more of him that he is not so easy to describe or to appreciate as the old lady against whose sweet gaiety only a misanthropic monster could find a word to say.

We add with a whimsical sense of certain advantages and disadvantages which are beyond reason, which are most comical, yet not without a certain pathos, dear reader, that those delightful old people are never—how shall we say it ? We have already delicately hinted, by choice adjectives, a fragility, a slowness, slenderness, lightness, which are inseparable from the character. Alas ! it is this—the old queen of society must not be—fat. We pronounce the word in a whisper, with a sense of running away after we have said it. And the English matron, as she grows old, does most usually develop somewhat largely—how innocently, in many cases, in defiance of all those laws which ought to restrain this too, too solid flesh, who does not know ? But this is her fate,—those outlines that were so round and dimpled, get clogged with too much substance—the soft round of the chin goes into folds and double chins—the form so light and active,—ah me ! why pursue the painful subject further ? The careless, cruel world assigns cruel reasons, and suggests eating and drinking and over-ease, and exalts slightness of form into a moral quality. Substantial sisters, it is not so !—but still there is no reversal to be hoped for of that heartless judgment. We must brave it as we can. And in your ample robes, with draperies less severe than the girls delight in ; with the

young people about, who show what you were—while you in your turn console an anxious suitor here and there, with a smiling countenance, which shows that nothing more than becoming plumpness is what *they* will come to—you look very well under the trees. Gather round you in full abundance your silken skirts, your clouds of lace—the prettiest mysteries that soften an outline fuller than it once was. It is your privilege to be more good-natured, more kind and liberal, than the others—than any others under the trees of May.

As for fat men, there is not a word to be said for them. No social eminence can be theirs. They are stockbrokers, or journalists, or millionaires. If by chance one of them gets into a Cabinet or a ball-room, 'Punch' has his eye upon him. There is no room for him in Rotten Row. Let him betake himself to his club, and swell and swagger at a bow-window which repeats his proportions. We are sorry for him, but he is not sorry for himself. He laughs, and his big waistcoat heaves. He likes to "shake the press before him," and sit upon two chairs; but we dismiss him as altogether out of keeping. Those trim young exquisites can never grow to be like him; though he too, if you look at him, is almost offensively clean, and fresh, and well groomed, with a flower in his coat that scents the air.

If there is any other place where this crowd is to be seen in something like the same perfection, it will be at the period of private views with which this month commences, but to which, alas! at this present writing, we cannot guide the reader—for who knows what those judges may be deciding who have the fate of the young painters of England in their hands? who

are now deliberating or have erated,—an irresponsible com in whose confidence are body the porters, who, let us not w pitying hearts fasten upon a darkness the pictures w so many hopes are entom know more or less w be upon those shir though how many fine ping smiling out of how many old gent for their constituents or eties, how many fox their dogs, who can say will occupy probably half the sp —and it is to be hoped that you, generous reader, will be thankful for the revelation of so many people who still, in those bad times, are able to pay handsomely for having their portraits painted; and there will be the usual number of clear and shining landscapes, as clear and free from mist or any atmospheric influence as were the exquisite young gentlemen of whom we have been talking. But the most innocent outsider is not so unsophisticated as to imagine that the pictures are the chief things to be looked at on the day of the private view. Perhaps you will only catch a glimpse of the portrait of Mr. Millais's—painted, if with less glow of colour, as firmly and as proudly as Titian ever painted—over the shoulder of the fine lady who is discussing over again with a group of her *semblables* that eternal question about Lady Jane. You will see the sea-spray dashing, as Mr Hook has caught it, among the feathers of the tallest bonnet that Paris has persuaded London into accepting for the beginning of the season, but will not be able to smell the vigorous salt breeze which that painter has the secret of sending into Piccadilly, for the less wholesome and less agreeable odour of the patchouly. And Orchard-

son's delicate white and yellow will be crushed out by a sage-green sleeve ; and Mr Vicat Cole's most glowing landscape will strive to shine at you between the chinks of the arms of a fat man who has his back to it. This, we know, is how it will be. But there is a pleasant admixture in the company at Burlington House of another world which is not that of Rotten Row. There stand the representatives of Art for the moment the host and hostesses of society ; in pleasant confidence, their feet upon the floor that is their own, and all the patrons and patronesses in a certain subjection, which is a happy change once in a way. So many picturesque heads bearded at their will, and indifferent to the dictates of fashion, make an interest in the midst of the fine people ; heads which are more or less familiar by introduction of 'Punch,' that great familiariser of the famous, even to the rustic spectator, and which almost all have a vigour and character which mark them out from the *dilettanti*. The art-ladies are not so fortunate, for dress tells more in the case of a woman than of a man. When they dress by inspiration of their husbands, the effect is apt to be less satisfactory than that which is produced by the picturesque looks, and now and then a velvet coat among the gentlemen ; and when their inspiration is that of Posthwaite (which still survives to some extent in these regions), the hanging sleeves and dressing-gown garments, amid all the rustle and flutter of fine company, is anything but edifying. It is, perhaps, sometimes a way of disguising the fact that otherwise one would be behind the fashion, which is better perhaps than home-made strainings after the fashion, but not otherwise

to be commended. These, however, are exceptional phenomena ; and the young ladies in sage-green half Japanese, half æsthetic, are very probably not connected with art at all except by fond aspirations. They form an incident in the otherwise somewhat featureless *longueurs* of the private view. The neglected pictures wait till the public come in which wishes to see them, but to the fine people a Japanese maiden is always entertaining. The swells point her out to their female companions—"don't you know?"—and for a moment Lady Jane is permitted to rest.

As we cannot tell you all we could wish about Burlington House, let us go and see some of the pictures which form a permanent exhibition in other places. The first and most important is that of Mr Holman Hunt, near the spot where the feet of the May visitor will go early, the ample doors of the Grosvenor Gallery. Holman Hunt has been, since the days when pre-Raphaelitism seemed a new revelation, a power apart among the painters of England. To say that he does not deserve this position would be rash indeed ; but there are various qualities which tend to procure and keep such a place, which are not simple merit. He has exhibited, and indeed accomplished, very little numerically—which, though it is strange to say so, is always in the artist's favour. It does not seem to have been so considered in the high days of art, when Giotto and all his successors laboured incessantly, not elaborating one picture, but producing so many, that, had there been art critics in those days (as no doubt there were, though they did not write in newspapers), there would without doubt have been much talk of pot-boilers, and of the impossibility of any

man who did so much doing always his best. Mr Holman Hunt has been able to deliver himself from the possibility of such an accusation. He has painted little, with the intention of making that little the best of his time; and here, again, for the third or fourth time, we are called upon to step aside into a sort of chapel of high art, and set to our seal that it is so. The place of exhibition is a room in Bond Street, but it is carefully arranged for its office as if it were intended for religious worship, the light interrupted and studied, the space so curtained and carpeted that no profane foot can tread too loudly, or profane eye approach too closely. The spectators steal in, alarmed if a dress should rustle or a shoe creak, and seat themselves in silent absorption before the picture which Mr Ruskin, kindly quoted for us by Mr Hunt himself, declares to be likely to be considered the greatest religious picture of the age. It is difficult in the soft atmosphere, so carefully tempered and toned down, to see who our next neighbour is—which, indeed, is an impertinent desire, and no way to our advantage to know. Our object here is quite other than such vulgar investigations—this is very different from Burlington House. The fine people come not here, or if they come, they sink into a well-bred imitation of the votaries, and communicate their mutual sentiments with a whisper of awe, as we all do—and there is never a word of Lady Jane. The reverential little assembly is never without one clergyman in it, who might be about to perform a little preparatory service; and we sit on ascending platforms, like the gallery of an old-fashioned church.

So much about the accessories, and so little about the picture!

Dear reader, you will have divined that we find ourselves in a dilemma, and do not for the moment know what to say. The picture is a work of high imagination, but it does not follow the lines or obey the impulse of that more ordinary pictorial inspiration which has so often, on storied wall and canvas, in church and palace, set forth the same scene; one of the most beautiful scenes in the story, which has been the chief inspiration of art, since ever art was in the Western modern world. "Arise, take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt." This is the foundation and central point of the picture; but Mr Holman Hunt has not been satisfied with the divine group in the centre. He has combined this subject with a commemoration of the Massacre of the Innocents, which he calculates had happened in Bethlehem a very short time before; and his object is to present to the spectator a vision of the triumph of the little martyrs who were the first to die for their Lord.

The foreground of the picture, accordingly, is filled with groups of happy infants accompanying their child-Lord upon his journey, and suddenly perceived by him as he turns in his mother's arms at a certain moment, described by Mr Hunt as just before the dawn, in the bright Syrian moonlight. These children, unseen by the parents, advance by the side of the central group, some before, some slightly behind. They are children "from two years old and under," according to the description given by the wise men, from which Mr Hunt concludes that our Lord Himself must have been about that age. The children Mr Hunt describes to be wreathed with flowers for the sacrifice, and to be carried along by a rivulet of the water of life, upon which they are sup-

posed to float with buoyant footsteps over the broken ground. This is a point, however, on which the gazer requires much explanation. The blue coils among which the very substantial little feet are moving with what seems a solid tread, not airy or fantastical at all, and very much more like the coils of serpents than those of living water. So far as it carries out the idea of a stream at all, which in our eyes is not much, it is a metallic stream, not very wholesome, we would think, with an iridescence and metallic gleam which indicates either stagnation or some very curious combination of chemicals. From this strange shallow brook-let, if brook it is, the splash of the children's feet is supposed to raise bubbles prismatic and full of colour, the largest of which floats straight in front of the ass which Joseph is leading, and seems very likely to make that patient animal bolt—as any of his brethren, not miraculously restrained, would certainly do. The bubble is a large and fine one, and speaks of soap as clearly as ever bubble did, though soap is far from Mr Holman Hunt's thoughts. Painted in it (we wonder if George Eliot's youthful suggestion to her free-thinking friend to "paint the Crucifixion in a soap-bubble" has anything to do with this) is a fanciful scene, in which the spectator can see the figures of blowing angels and a line of light which mounts to the skies, and is quite ready to believe that it is the ancient vision of Jacob, and the ladder upon which angels ascended and descended, which is here symbolically introduced to carry into the far distance the tradition of a tender and touching belief. The fantastic conceit of this bubble seems the keynote both of the colour and meaning of the picture, the metallic tints of blue

which seems to find reflection even in the very outlines of the glorified babes, and which throw a sheen even upon the truer colour of the distant horizon, concentrating in its gleaming globe; while the angelic forms, mystically indicated within the vision of a vision, express the continuity of supernatural intercourse between heaven and earth as visible to the eyes that can see.

We might remark, however, that the white and shadowy forms that show dimly in the reflection carry out the ethereal character of that intercourse much better than the extremely chubby babies, whose mottled flesh and substantial limbs convey no idea of spiritual bodies to the spectator. The little group is in its way as lovely a group of children as could be found—children fresh from the bath, out of well-cared-for nurseries, prize babies of whom any mother might be proud, but, if angelic, of a chubby order—more like the *putti* that delighted the Italians of the seventeenth century than more heavenly visions. One feels curious to know where Mr Holman Hunt found his models. If the infants of Jerusalem are as massive as their maytred predecessors are here depicted, then all our ideas of the slimmer form of Eastern races must be a delusion. The children are garlanded and linked together with ropes of flowers which assuredly never came from any garden but that of a florist's boxes. One of them has a wonderful little nightcap upon its head, a most brilliant bit of colour, in which the prismatic hues of the water below and the bubble above are repeated in a glow of intense light. The foremost of the little figures seems astray from the rest in a little dream of his own. He is examining the breast of his little shirt, in which is a distinct and

very clear out; but is, Mr Hunt explains, "bewildered to find that his new spiritual body leaves no trace of the fatal wound." This suggestion approaches, unfortunately, near to the grotesque, and shows a fancy so high fantastical that it loses the very sense of that higher imagination which is always sober and within bounds. That the body of the little martyr should show some glorified trace of the blow, some scar big enough for a mother's kiss, some mark of honour and signet of high distinction, comes within the possibilities of devout belief; but why should its little shirt, presumably a spiritual garment, as it covers a spiritual body, be cut, and the soft flesh show no mark? We are unable to imagine an answer. We are ready to concede the human dress, in some simulacra of which even respectable ghosts are allowed to walk about; but why should the shirt have the traces of the blow which has disappeared from the body of the child; Is it, after all, only the real little human shirt that has been washed from its bloody stain, and slipped on again? And how does the spiritual body reconcile itself to a profane and earthly garment, if it is so? The conceit is too artificial to have anything to do with art, and is very contradictory of the divine story in which Thomas put—or might have put—"his fingers in the prints of the nails" in the risen body of his Lord.

The central group has but little in common with that sacred ideal which so many painters have represented. The Virgin sits high upon the ass, in full face, a large figure, slightly smiling, as she looks down upon her child. She is not the awed and reverential maiden of the old pictures, herself scarcely out of the vision and wonder of youth—

but a largely developed and mature woman quite accustomed to be a mother, and not without traces of the world. The action of the child, who throws himself back upon her arm in a delightful recognition of the little group which is so strangely revealing itself upon the way, is natural and full of life. The pretty wilfulness of the fling aside from the mother's attempt to clothe him, the delightful smile which has broken upon the little face as he perceives the unlooked-for attendants upon his way, would be perfect if the child was but as other children, finding out unexpectedly a delightful novelty in the midst of the journey. But surely it is all inadequate to express the feeling of the Divine infant discovering at his side the little martyrs whose innocent lives have been given for him. When we remember the wonderful children of the San Sisto picture (that picture which an exciting rumour declares to be in the market, and possibly offered to England—a thought which takes away one's breath), the godlike boy in the mother's arms, the infantile faces, grand and majestic in their simplicity, beneath—or when we think of the lovely faces of Botticelli's boyish angels, looking on at the mysterious child whom they watch and try to understand,—it seems like a play on our credulity to ask us, as Mr Ruskin does, and as Mr Hunt, quoting Mr Ruskin, does not seem to hesitate to do, to recognize this as a great religious picture. The curled darling thrown back on his mother's arm, with a laugh of childish delight which shows his little white teeth and curves his rosy lips with pleasure, is a beautiful child, but bears no sign that he is the Son of God. He is an arch and delightful infant, wilful, accustomed to play,

enchanted with the pretty sight ; but it would have been strange indeed—stranger than anything else in the marvelous story—had this been all that was in the face of the child-Christ as he saw the infant saints suddenly on his way.

The child on his mother's arm recognizes them ; but the innocents seem, on their part, to take no notice of their little Lord. They do not crowd about him to share his look, but hold apart entangled in the wreath which is so distinctly what we call in Scotland "gum-flowers," not one of them raising his face to the Divine wayfarer. We are not told whether there is any meaning in this, or why the celestial children should be preparing this little masque upon the road if they do not care to look up and see the object of their martyrdom and their presence here. They are leading back the colt, Mr Hunt informs us, which has lagged from the side of his mother,—which is kind of them, but not a satisfactory motive. No secondary office, though one of service and benevolence, could have kept these little brethren from gazing upon the Divine child and seeking his notice, if human probabilities are to be considered. No party of children but would do so with one of their natural comrades ; how much more the new denizens of heaven, conscious that it was their Lord who was passing by, and of their own glorious position in his immediate train ?

This is too much, perhaps, about one picture ; but Mr Holman Hunt's position is not an ordinary one. He takes upon him that office of a teacher which, when asserted with sufficient boldness, has a quite marvelous effect upon the imagination of the mass of a man's contemporaries. And he is a painter who has done enough

to make every work he produces of interest to his countrymen. He who has given us that one noble, sorrowful, tender image, the face full of love and patience, and all gentleness and greatness, of Him who stands at the door and knocks, deserves great things at our hands ; even though he has put the light of the world in a medieval lantern, as if it had been wanted to show the door of our hearts, and the steps thereto. That and a great deal more can be forgiven him in grateful recollection that he stands among the few—how few !—who in all the ages have been able to gain a glimpse of such a countenance as might, without scorn, be attributed to the Son of God. But Mr Hunt has fallen into the error, apparently congenial to his mind, of abstracting himself from common life in order to produce with infinite labour and absorption of his entire soul in every detail a picture, which shall be more than a picture, which shall be a new gospel, a prophetic message such as it has never been given, let Mr Ruskin say what he will, to any painter to give forth to the world. Let us grant that Carpaccio meant a great deal more than he knew in that manful story of stout St George, and that with the help of such a skilled interpreter as Mr Ruskin (and prompt renunciation as of the devil and all his works of Mr Ruskin's disciples and co-interpreters, who would make us, if that was possible, detest Carpaccio), we may learn many things therefrom : yet the old Venetian was no secluded soul, and had no thought that, like Elijah, he, only he, was left to make the world aware that there was a greater than Baal. On the face of the thing it is grand to spend seven years of life or more upon a single picture—to caress its every detail—to let im-

agination loose, so that every line may teach a moral lesson, and no shoe-string be without a meaning. There are few who can, and perhaps as few who will, make such a sacrifice. But it is dangerous, beyond measure dangerous, to be thus uplifted over one's brethren, and to feel that the time spent upon one's work, and the pains taken, and the minute and endless care bestowed upon a production which has been the sole absorbing thought of night and day, ought—as indeed they should if labour and care were all—to make the work unique in art, high above the ordinary level, a thing to force the world's attention. The great masters did not do so. They knew nothing of this elaborate self-devotion. They did their best with honest zeal and love of their work. The famous canon of slow and elaborate production, which both in literature and art is prescribed to the labourer, is contradicted by the practice of every master: and it is at least as likely to lead to the elaborate failure of over-devotion as to the production of the "greatest religious picture" or any triumph of art. We do not think that, except in the eyes of his sect, this picture will appear to any one a triumph either of the Innocents or of the Illuminati. It is a great thing, no doubt, that Mr Ruskin should vouch for it, and a painter may well be buoyed up with an exhilaration that takes the semblance of flattered vanity, when the only oracle who speaks with absolute authority proclaims his production the greatest picture of the age. But he should be very careful how he accepts this dictum. And it would be well for him, we think, to compare his chubby cherubs with the angel-children in the great Venetian pictures, with the lovely, thoughtful boys of Botti-

celli, and those majestic infants who stand under the San Sisto, and the Foligno Raphaels, with things unutterable in their uplifted faces. The baby gravely looking through the slit, in its nice clean little gown, for the wound that killed it, is a conceit worthy of the Emblems of Quarles, rather than of the Gospel of our Lord.

There is another picture holding solitary state at a little distance from Mr Holman Hunt's sanctuary to which we may now direct our attention a little, with the remark in passing, that nothing can be more curious and striking than thus to pass out of Bond Street into Piccadilly in the heart of London variety and gaiety and extravagance, from one hushed and darkened temple of art in which an incident in the sacred story is exhibited, into another where groups of art-lovers, stilled into something like awe, go out of the sunshine to contemplate the great concluding act of that story, the Crucifixion. Munkacsy's Calvary is a picture with an altogether different inspiration from that of Mr Hunt. It belongs to a country where the conditions under which pictures of so high an aim can find a place are totally different. A private purchaser with only a room, however large, or a limited domestic gallery, in which to place a work of art, forces the painter into moderate dimensions and a sort of practicable domestic sentiment—a circumstance which limits English art in the most remarkable way. But where Herr Munkacsy's genius was nurtured there is wider scope, and his hand is not restrained by the conviction that his picture must be something which can be lived with,—which limits the Englishman as with an invisible tether, if it also confers upon his certain easily recognis-

able advantages. We do not now in England venture upon the closing scenes of the great tragedy. Few are the galleries which have room for such subjects; and he could be audacious indeed who would place the scene on Calvary in his dining-room. The foreign painter is better off. He has still churches in which to place a masterpiece, or public buildings where there is room enough, and not too much familiarity.

The size, the distance, the grandeur of the scene here portrayed, are curiously impressive after such a compromise with the ideal as is attempted in Mr Hunt's picture. Munkacsy has already made what may be called a European reputation. The power of his forcible, almost violent individuality, the realism which brings nature, fresh and spontaneous, into the positions and circumstances conventionalised by art, have already been recognised with that keenness of individual feeling, involving as much opposition as applause, which gives edge and piquancy to success. This picture is smoother, and perhaps less original, than those previously exhibited in England. The chief group is somewhat feeble—when is it otherwise? Neither nature nor the fitness of things permits that display of bodily anguish which our too correct information on the subject would require, if any illusion were to be preserved. And therefore the figure on the cross is always more or less conventional. So is the group around: St John too meekly observant of his Master's last order; and one of the attendant Marys too much startled by an event which she must, for some moments at least, have certainly anticipated. But opposite to this mournful party stands facing the spectator, a single brutal cynical figure, the figure of the

executioner, with axe in hand and ladder over shoulder. He has just come down from giving the last twist to one of the ropes that hold the malefactors. Use and a cruel dulness have quenched all sensibility in him. He casts a sullen stupid look upon the mourners, his eye caught perhaps rather by the glory of the hair that sweeps over the shoulders of the Magdalen, than the spectacle of the sorrow which is enough to touch any heart. Barabbas would have had a certain interest for him had he been swung to that fatal tree; but what occasion there is for all this ado about a fanatic from Galilee, the wretch knows not. He looks at the women with a dull contempt. The sights and sounds that have distinguished this from all the executions that ever took place in Jerusalem have not affected him: the rolling blackness on the sky that obscures the daylight, the excitement of the authorities, the cry which the centurion has just given forth, touch not at all this brutal fellow in the exercise of his trade. He thinks, perhaps, he has been cheated by those Romans who, forsooth, would have the man's clothes and cast their dice over the seamless robe, though they had none of the trouble. He would like to nail up a few of them too, to teach them to interfere with his perquisites; and as for the women, and that one with the hair especially, what a fuss they are making about an everyday incident! All the stupid cruelty of the class which is below human sympathy, too dull to feel, too degraded to understand, is in this wonderful figure. He is as much beneath the rabble who shout out their partisan insults to the Crucified, as they are inferior to the noble Arab in the foreground, who turns round upon his horse with

an open-eyed look of wonder, and sudden perception that here is no malefactor getting his deserts, but something beyond experience, beyond knowledge. Two Rabbis walk away from the scene across the foreground,—one with open mouth and emphatic finger demonstrating that outraged justice has done well in making short work of this revolutionary; the other startled, impressed, not sure of that nor of anything in the shock of awe and surprise. Though there is no resemblance in grouping or detail, the picture reminds us of the great Tintoretto in the school of San Rocco in Venice, perhaps only because of the life and meaning in those groups, before whom something is taking place which is more than the highest of them can understand.

We find ourselves suddenly transported from the highest aims of art to what we can scarcely call anything but the lowest, when we turn from those half-sacred enclosures, where the spectators speak under their breath, and walk on tiptoe—to the Exhibition blazoned outside as the *Salon Parisien*, with a palpable appeal to tastes in art, and in—we will not say nature, for nature has little to do with the matter, but—the fantastic and obnoxious realism which has associated itself with everything that is least satisfactory in society, and which has its court and capital in Paris. The chief exhibitor here, and the only one who calls for notice, is the young Belgian painter, M. Van Beers, sensationalist, impressionist, or whatever he may please to call himself,—a young man of wonderful gifts, who has flung himself into a kind of fame by the reckless exercise of an extraordinary cleverness, which it pleases his school to call daring and truth—an assumption founded upon complete ignor-

ance of the difference between truth and fact. The contortions of an acrobat may be most literal fact, and are so; but to find in them a truthful exhibition of the laws of human movement would be the effort of a fool; and nothing can be more striking than the illustrations of this fact afforded us by such a display as this. M. Van Beers is wilfully unequal both in execution and sentiment. The contrast between the really extraordinary finish of most of the figure-pictures and the reckless dash of the majority of the landscapes, is even less remarkable than that between the feeling displayed in "*Le Mal du Pays*," and the dreadfully prosaic realism of some of the larger pictures, more noticeably two, which are, we suppose, exhibited to introduce an English element into the collection: the composition called "*Peace with Honour*," a very real Life-Guardsman wooing an equally real nursemaid; and "*Flirtation*," a nicely painted representation of a very commonplace ball-room couple in a conservatory. Apart from this inequality, an inspection of a very few minutes will show that we are here looking on the work of a consummate artist, seldom perhaps characterised by the soul that makes all the difference between art and genius, but, as technical art, almost perfect in its way. Four pictures strike us for their merit, four others for different reasons, while beyond these the collection is little more than a series of beautifully painted illustrations of the art of sprawling. The gem of the exhibition is the portrait of Peter Benoit, excellent alike in expression, execution, and colouring. Next, perhaps, in interest is "*Le Mal du Pays*," a girl who has evidently left her home to her shame, finding a moment for sad reflection,

while the carriage waits for her in the background. The picture of the yacht *La Sirène* is too well known from engravings and newspaper reports to need any description; but it is not saying too much to speak of it as an almost perfect representation of the atmosphere of a calm day on the shores of the sea. The fourth picture which we should rank as good, is "Little Jack Horner," in which the painting is exquisite, and the child's delight at the discovery of the plum beautifully expressed. On the other hand, "*La Charmeuse de Serpents*" gives the impression, on first sight, of little more than a pair of bright green legs, though, on closer inspection, a body appears with serpents wreathed round its arms; a curious and rather unpleasant picture. The same brilliant green appears again, not far from this picture, as the background, perfectly flat and studded with vermilion spots, upon which is set a ghastly idiot's head with eyes of different colours, clad in cap and bells, and named in the catalogue "*Folie*." Widely different from this is a large picture on the other side of the room, which is called "*An Allegory*," though the hidden meaning is not easy to discover. It represents the trial of a witch by the Inquisition, and differs from most pictures of the kind in that it inspires in us no sympathy whatever for the accused. As a study of a sea of faces it is worth looking at. M. Van Beers has carried the prevailing tendency to artistic upholstery further than usual, the whole tone not only of the hangings of the room, but in many cases of the frames of the picture, being one uniform and sombre tint of olive-green.

Thus the extremes of mystical religious fancy, fine-drawn beyond the following of the sober mind,

and of audacious and irreverent materialism, defying all the moderations of nature, are to be found within reach of each other for the choice of the spectator. London is not a model town. It is Babylon to many an artless imagination; and were we to believe all it says of itself in its higher circles, the fated cities of the plains were but novices in comparison with its accomplishments in vice: and yet we venture to assert that the *Salon Parisien* will not attract a tenth part of the crowd which flows slowly in and out of Mr Holman Hunt's veiled and guarded doors.

Those whose enjoyment of the season is a brief one, turtled naturally, as the day steals on, to the question of Theseus—

"What abridgment have we for the evening?"

What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?"

If we were to answer with the courtier as to how many "sports" were rife for your highness's choice, we fear we should be able to name no such excellent fooling as that in which the immortal Bottom would fain have played every part. The theatre, which languished long in semi-decadence before the happy advent of the present generation, is once more at the height of a period which has returned to it with zest and something like enthusiasm. Never was the actor more high—we might say so high—in the general esteem, and never were theatres so many or so crowded. But if we should be asked to what high excellence this fact is to be attributed, we could make no reply. There are a number of excellent actors on the stage, and there is a great deal of talk about the respectability of the profession, the "status" given to its members,

and the elevating influence exercised by its performances. But as a matter of fact, there is not at the present moment on the stage—with the exception of the delightful comedy in which the Bancrofts are taking their leave of the profession—a single play which is worth the trouble of being acted, of occupying the attention of reasonable spectators, or the time of men and women who call themselves artists. The “Queen’s Shilling,” at present being played at the St James’s, is indeed an honest bustling comedy, vigorous enough of its kind, and the “Quiet Rubber,” at the same theatre, a character-sketch of great delicacy and cleverness: while the “Silver King” is a stirring and effective melodrama. But all of these are old favourites, brought back to the stage to cover the defeat of the higher drama. And with these exceptions, all the London theatres are given up to farce or burlesque, or the broad spectacle-melodrama, which is effective by means of its bold seizure and reproduction of the most prosaic realities, but has no pretension to literary skill or dramatic construction; or else attempt by more equivocal attractions to make up for the absence of plays that are worth listening to. To hold the mirror up to nature has almost ceased to be even the professed object of the stage. A farcical incident of the broadest character, a practical joke, and impossible adventure, seems to have taken the place in the public estimation of story and character, which is no advantage either for the public or the stage.

“The Candidate,” made for ever memorable by the fact that the Prime Minister of England took his diversion—on the night when the whole country was in tears and mourning over the

fate of Gordon—at the theatre where this lively piece of nonsense is represented; “The Magistrate,” in which Messrs Clayton & Cecil have condescended to make buffoons of themselves; and most of all, “The Private Secretary,” which has likewise had a *bruyant* success,—are all based upon one ridiculous and impossible incident, with which neither nature nor art have anything to do. “The Candidate” is the best of the three. It is carried along by the excellent acting of Mr Wyndham, whose Lord Oldacre, a young married man who loves life and the world without being a *roué*, and who is kept in a country house by the machinations of his mother-in-law (that everlasting mother-in-law!) while he is dying for diversion, and ready to procure it at any cost, is really admirably done, and shows him worthy of something more and better to do and say than has been provided for him. By way of procuring himself a fortnight in town, this light-hearted hero seizes at the opportunity of becoming a candidate for the representation of a distant borough, a mere form—for as a Conservative he has no chance,—and sends in his place his secretary, an old schoolfellow, poor and a Radical, who, on his side, is tempted by the possibility of once in his life passing as a great personage with unlimited command of money, and freedom to speak his mind, to accept this absurd substitution. The result is, that the pseudo Lord Oldacre is elected with acclamation as the Radical member for East (North) Hampton, the colleague of Bradley, and that the real one comes home, after his innocent escapade in town, to confront as he can the difficulties of the ridiculous imbroglio that follows. Mr Wyndham’s easy and

natural acting, his boyish eagerness to get away, his delighted adoption of the new idea which offers him a means of doing so, his comical despair when everything turns against him, are all extremely funny, and kept in perfect good taste by the actor, whose looks and manners are in entire accordance with his character, and who never exceeds the fooling that is permitted to a gentleman. Another most excellent performance is that of Mr Blakely, in the person of the fat and unctuous missionary, who keeps the ladies in subjection, and whose tone and look are in the best and highest style of not unamiable caricature,—broad as the farce demands, yet most comically within the possibilities of the character. These two excellent actors make the piece extremely amusing and worth seeing, especially as they never carry the farce into buffoonery.

The extremely ridiculous piece, which has the same *motif*, and deals with the substitution of one "Private Secretary" for another, is the reverse of this—a piece of buffoonery from beginning to end. It has filled the theatre for nights, and made the fortune of the young author and manager; but there is scarcely a redeeming feature in the farrago of nonsense which nevertheless continues to delight the public. The poor little curate, who is the butt of the piece, and whose ludicrous appearance with what he calls his "goods and chattels"—consisting of a bandbox, a bag, a rug, an umbrella, and a pair of goloshes—delights the audience,—is knocked about as Molière's unfortunate butts are knocked about in the first transition from the purely pantomimic plays of the primitive stage—though even the "*Barbouillé*" is a world

above the Rev. Arthur Spalding. As a proof of the utter imbecility of the piece, the words above quoted—one of the choicest *morceaux* in the composition—are received nightly with shouts of laughter; and the curate's drawl of "Do you know," with which he begins every sentence, is drowned in shrieks of merriment from the audience. The unfortunate hero is knocked down, thrown out of the window, sat upon, pulled to pieces in every conceivable way, to the growing enthusiasm of the lookers-on. The only thing that can be said is, that the acting of two of the company is admirable. Mr Hill and Mr Penley make their parts individual and highly amusing; but it is a kind of degradation to two excellent actors to attain even a *succès fou* by such means.

The same thing is more or less true of "*The Magistrate*" at the Court, which is also a tissue of improbable situations redeemed by excellent playing. This is specially worth pointing out, as the author of the play has been complimented on all sides upon his knowledge of the stage and the construction of his piece, which repeats with more pretension the faults we have already pointed out—a *motif* quite inadequate and of the most ridiculous description, and incidents so farcical as to be scarcely above the horseplay of the most primitive efforts. Mr Posket, a police magistrate, has married a widow with a son by her previous marriage, and has been led by her to believe her age and that of her son to be five years less than they really are. This deceit the wife is very anxious to keep concealed, and on hearing of the arrival in London of an old Indian acquaintance who knows her real age, she goes in the evening to a *café* where he is dining to

entreat him to keep her secret. Unfortunately Mr Posket has been brought by his precocious stepson to sup in another room of the same *café*, and with extraordinary imprudence all the characters remain in the establishment after the legal time for closing. The police appear, the proprietor hurries everybody into one room, in which he extinguishes the lights, and in the panic of the moment the magistrate unknowingly takes refuge under the very table beneath which his wife is hiding. Ultimately the male characters make their escape with difficulty, while the ladies are captured by the police. In the morning the latter are brought before Mr Posket, who has struggled back to his Court in time to exercise his duties as magistrate, though in a state of indescribable confusion, both mental and physical, arising from the excitement of the previous night. Half asleep and entirely demoralised, he unconsciously sentences his wife and her sister to a week's imprisonment, following the suggestion of his clerk. His utter breakdown when he finds what he has done, and the contrast of his immaculate respectability and the office he holds with all the incidents of the night, are no doubt irresistibly comic; but the play is broad farce throughout, and with less capable actors would be unworthy of consideration at all. It is saved by the excellent acting of Mrs John Wood, and of Messrs Clayton, Cecil, and Eversfield, and the life and "go" that is put into it by the whole company; and makes a sufficient evening's diversion for the unconcerned spectator who likes to be amused without much caring how. But surely, with actors of the calibre of these above mentioned, something better might be attempted than the trivial plot of a charade, lengthened out by the

oldest follies of the stage, the vice of the pantomime. We member an Italian comedian in this hiding under table incident, which we are sorry to offer to the credit of Mr Clayton and Mr Cecil, both of whom, and especially the latter, are capable of very much more work. But if the public love to be kept on the broad grin, and prefers the ludicrous to the humorous, what can the actor do? The ludicrous is easier than the humorous, and a practical joke has many advantages over that explosion of holding the mirror up to nature, which necessitates a different kind and degree of intelligence.

All these considerations we throw to the winds when we enter the bright precincts of the Savoy Theatre, where Mr Gilbert and Mr Sullivan keep their legitimate places in defiance of all laws—though that is a paradox. "The Mikado" is above criticism. There is no question in this whimsical world of fun and tuneful ditties of holding up any mirror. Whether it be "The Sorcerer" or "The Pirate," or that delightful "Jury" who award unheard-of damages, under any circumstances, to Angelina, there is here neither possibility to be considered or rules of art to be observed. When the able seaman and his captain change places on the admirable argument that they had been previously changed at nurse, we accept the reasoning with delight: and demand nothing but a little variation from the favourite pose of judge and general, which, by repetition, becomes monotonous, to content us. This is fully secured in the Japanese Lord High Executioner of Mr Grossmith, in which there is no perceptible echo of his former impersonations, and in all the de

lightful and gorgeous denizens of the brilliant sunshiny world which may be like Japan (and for the sake of the Japanese we hope it is), but certainly is not like any other scene we know. Nothing can be more charmingly pretty than this play, if play it can be called. There is no buffoonery, no knocking about, no sitting upon, no hiding under tables. The art of the queer fairy-land in which Mr Gilbert plays his pranks, is perhaps not a very elevated art, but at all events it is above devices of this kind. The delightful aristocrat, Pooh-Bah is quite an original among state officials, and nothing so bland or so splendid as the Mikado himself has dawned upon our dazzled vision for a long time. It is delightful fooling all through, as pretty a spectacle as ever was, and for simple fun one of the very best of the author's productions. The three little maids from school in their beautiful dresses, with their giggles and their gravities, could not be better; and Mr Rutland Barrington's face is of itself a study. We invite the reader who would deliver himself from all sublunary thoughts and enter the realms of pure whim, fun, and fancy, to approach without a doubt, and take his diversion undisturbed by criticism. The authors of "The Mikado" have secured just the combination of the unknown and the known which is good for their purposes, in the realm so captivating to the imagination, so pictorial, and so splendid as Japan.

By the way, the Japanese village, a curious little artificial encampment, seems about to be, for this season, a substitution for the Healtheries and Fisheries of previous years; a place where the stray population may lounge, and gaze at much or little as fate may

graciously permit. It is too small, however, to give that margin to a crowd which has been found in these other exhibitions, and wants open air, and a possibility of a garden, and escape from the close little streets. Could it be transported to those grounds where London has amused itself for several seasons, and where the quaint shops and cottages might have a natural relief of greenery, it would be much more successful and captivating. As it is, the chief interest in it are the attendants, who have been of the greatest use, we are told on the playhills, to the management of the Savoy, and who shuffle about in their slipshod way, with their green, voluminous robes, in a manner that aids the effect of the play, and shows the difference between the humble classes and those sublime officials who conduct the government of that enlightened but mysterious land. We advise the visitor to let the one illustrate the other, and to have his tea served to him by the yellow little maid with her preposterous sash and wrappings, who is the genuine article, before he goes to see her dainty betters, the little maidens who are not yellow in their summer scene.

It is curious to have to speak of the English stage without any notice of Mr Irving, whose personality is about the most important and notable thing on the English stage as it stands. He will return to his patronage of Shakespeare in May, and he will succeed in making the world listen to his version of Hamlet, as no one else seems capable of doing. He comes across the Atlantic with more fame and dollars than ever, to meet the welcome of that singular popularity to which we cannot assign a reason, or explain the

causes. For the number of those who really consider him a great actor is very limited. His marked defects of voice, gesture and bearing, his limited comprehension of what is possible and not possible, and the undisguisable individuality which makes him always Irving, whether his supposed character be Shylock or Romeo, are almost universally acknowledged. And yet there is no one else whose position is so strong, or whose efforts are met with the same unfailing response. We may not like him, but we *must* see him in whatever he does. The weekly critics have exhausted the language in explaining why, in setting forth his conscientious effort, his high aim, when they could not lay claim on his behalf either to artistic success or any legitimate claim to success. But a high aim is not enough to secure the strong and continual following which Mr. Irving undoubtedly possesses. There is something, nay, much, in that heroic self-assertion

which is so potent, in this age, and in that pertinacious temperament which never relinquishes its claim, but which is capable of going on saying, "I am Sir Oracle," even when all the dogs bark. This, and the excellence of all the properties, the splendour of the spectacles which have come to be necessary to our present conception of the histrionic art, and last, though not least, the grace and attraction of Miss Terry, who, if somewhat weak in Shakespeare, is always so graceful, so harmonious, even in her mannerisms — have doubtless much to do with a success which, without being altogether undeserved, is unquestionably much beyond the deserts of this actor as an individual. Mr. Irving, however, is but an illustration of one of the most curious peculiarities of public appreciation in our time, in which, as Mr. Puff says, "the unanimity is wonderful when they do agree."

PORTRAIT OF A LADY.

PAINT me your perfect lady. I have seen
 Some part, perhaps the whole, of what I mean,
 Yet in articulate feature to declare
 The form that haunts my thought divinely fair
 May well outrange my skill ; but thy request
 Strikes all denial dumb. Here take my best.
 No noise thou hear'st, no preparation blows
 A trumpet where my perfect lady goes ;
 Nor with rude tramp she beats the hollow ground
 Nor minces nicely, nor with girlish bound
 Trips the light sod ; a woman, not a fairy,
 Upon an earthly base firm-poised her airy
 Conscience rests. No flaunting broad display
 Of rustling flounces marks her gentle way,
 But like the breezes of the light-winged May
 Softly she comes, and fragrant all as they.
 Oh, she is lovely ! all the summer dwells
 In her bright eyes, and every feature tells
 A treasured sweetness in the soul within,
 That beats like music through the lucid skin ;
 And when she speaks soft silvery accents flow
 Full-throated from a mellow depth below,
 Not elipt in shreds, nor with a tinkling din,
 A shallow plash from hollow heart within.
 Not bold is she to place herself before
 The first, nor slinks demure behind the door,
 But takes her place just where she ought to be,
 Nor makes you feel when there that it is she.
 With native grace, and fine untutored mien,
 She greets the poor, or stands before a queen,
 Sweeps with light flowing ease the festal floor,
 Or bends o'er sick-beds with the suffering poor.
 She hath no postures, knows no attitudes ;
 Her unschooled gesture gently shows her moods ;
 She casts no proud and patronising eye
 On those below, nor ducks before the high.
 All things to all she is : for why ?—in all
 Her skill is to be true and natural,
 True to herself, and to the high ideal
 That God's grace gave her to inform the real ;
 True to her kind, and to your every feeling
 Respondent with a power of kindest healing.
 She knows no falseness ; even the courtliest lie
 She dreams not ; truth flows from her deep blue eye ;
 And if her tongue speaks pleasant things to all,
 'Tis that she loveth well both great and small ;
 And all in her that mortals call politeness,
 Is but the image of her bright soul's brightness
 Direct from heaven. Such is the perfect fair
 Whom in my heart I hold, and worship there ;
 And if the picture likes thee well to see,
 Know, lady, more than half I stole from thee !

J. S. B.

CHEAP TELEGRAMS.

WHILST the majority of people are complaining that the Government proposals¹ in the matter of cheap telegrams are insufficient and disappointing, it may perhaps be allowed to us to point out a side of the question which has hardly received proper attention.

Sixpenny telegrams have been so long talked about that people had come to imagine that the present shilling rate was going to be reduced to sixpence, for an equivalent or nearly equivalent length of message. The all-important factor in the question—viz., at what cost, that is, at what expense, the Post-office could send a short telegram—has been completely ignored in most quarters. It was conveniently assumed when the idea of sixpenny telegrams was first started, that the cost of sending a message of ten words would be half the cost of sending a message of twenty words; and on this hasty assumption it was laid down that a net revenue as great as that now derived from shilling telegrams might in a few years be obtained from sixpenny telegrams; any loss felt at first from the fall in price being more than recouped by the immense increase of business.

Unfortunately the expense of sending telegrams cannot be reduced in this short and pleasant way. For one thing, there are processes to be gone through, common to all telegrams, short or long, and equally expensive whether the telegram consist of three or thirty words. For another, although the difference in length between, say, a

message of twenty and a message of thirty words represents some difference in expense, that difference is not so great as the difference in price to the sender of the telegram—viz., at the present rate 6d., or at the future rate 5d. In fact, it is the last part of the message which pays, and not the early part. Mr Shaw Lefevre, in introducing his Bill for "sixpenny telegrams," stated that the present average cost to the country of sending every telegram is 10d.; but that it is anticipated this cost would be reduced to 3½d. when shorter telegrams come into vogue. Thus every "sixpenny telegram" will be sent at a loss; and unless the average price paid by the telegraphing public exceeds 8½d., the telegraph revenue will show not only the very large reduction already predicted by Mr Shaw Lefevre, but an actual deficit. Now no amount of increase in the number of telegrams sent will get over this. If the average telegram is sent at a loss—that is, for a price lower than the cost of sending it—the total result must be a deficit—a fact which, however patent, has been persistently blinked by the advocates in the press of a reduced telegraph tariff.

So far as to the cost. With regard to the receipts, Mr Shaw Lefevre estimated that in the first year the average length of message, under the new tariff, would be twenty words, yielding 10d.; but it must be evident to every one who considers the matter, that this estimate, even if not over-sanguine as an estimate for the first year, does not repre-

¹ Since this article was in type, the Government have resolved to drop their Bill, but for reasons which do not effect the tenor of argument.—Ed. B. M.

sent the future. The experience of all foreign countries has been that the telegraphing public, as soon as they have an elastic tariff, cut down their messages year after year, until a pretty universal average of about fourteen words is attained. It is almost certain that the same gradual falling off in the length of messages will be witnessed in this country; and we cannot but think that the very phrase "sixpenny telegrams," which has so long been used to designate the telegram of the future, will have a contributory share in realizing that ideal, every telegram-sender striving to bring his message within the sixpenny limit.

We may note in passing that in the outcry which has followed the Government proposals, great ignorance has been shown of the systems in force on the Continent; it being frequently implied that in France, for instance, no charge is made for addresses. The truth is, that the Continental countries have always charged for addresses, even when they had, like ourselves, a twenty-word minimum. At the present time, including addresses, the average French telegram contains only fourteen words, the average German only twelve, and the average Swiss only fourteen. The Swiss and the French telegrams do not pay—that is, the expenditure balances or exceeds the revenue; and the German alone show a profit, a profit derived partly from the fact that the tariff (about which we shall speak presently) is higher, and partly from the existence of a system of so-called "urgent telegrams." These telegrams are sent at treble the ordinary price, and are allowed priority over all those sent at the ordinary price. The result of this system often is that a telegram, which in its ordinary turn would

be despatched in a few minutes, is again and again sent to the bottom of the heap before the signalling telegraphist, and thus may be delayed an hour or upwards by the incoming of "urgent" telegrams. This system, which of course makes for the rich and against the poor, is one which would not be entertained for a moment in England; for it would simply result in almost every telegraph, in a land where "time is money," being paid for at threefold rates—though in Germany, curiously enough, only some half-million out of the 18 millions of telegrams sent annually pay this threefold rate.

We think, however, that the German principle of a tariff which, while elastic enough to allow the shortest messages to be sent at reasonably low prices, yet is high enough to ensure a net revenue and not a deficit, is one to be commended. Indeed we hardly think that if the taxpaying public—which, after all, is larger than the telegraphing public—fully realized that the proposed sixpenny tariff, so far from giving too little, errs by giving too much, and that the consequence sooner or later will be that the Post-office will not only not be able to pay the interest on the immense capital (nearly £11,000,000) which has been sunk in the purchase of the telegraphs, but will show an actual loss on its carriage of telegrams,—we hardly think, we say, that if the taxpaying public realized all this, they would thank the House of Commons for having forced the Government to adopt this measure.

For there can be no doubt that this measure has been forced on the Government. That there should be a reduction in the telegraph tariff was no doubt pretty universally desired. At the same time, it would only be a minority,

though a noisy minority, that would recommend a large sacrifice of revenue for the sake of the telegraphing portion of the community. A and B will no doubt be glad, when telegraphing to their wives that they will not be home to dinner, to save sixpence in the process; but they will probably think the privilege dearly purchased if the consequence is that they have to pay a halfpenny in the pound more income-tax. It is only those whose business makes frequent telegraphing a necessity who will reap the full benefit, and who will not mind the sacrifice of general revenue when their own pockets are the gainers.

If, then, reduction there was to be, it ought to be within paying limits. We think that selfishness is at the root of much of the cry that the Post-office should not make a revenue, but use all its resources for increased facilities. Within due bounds, it is certainly desirable that the Post-office should so use its resources; but it is clearly undesirable that the whole of the community should be taxed in order that one part of the community may be able to obtain certain business advantages, which is practically what the sacrifice of the telegraph revenue would mean.

As we have indicated, the Germans have succeeded, apart from their system of "urgent telegrams," of which we could not recommend the adoption, in arriving at a tariff which, while it allows the shortest message to be sent, yet secures a high enough average price to pay. Their plan is to charge a *grund-tax*, or fee of 2½d. per telegram, with a word-rate of a halfpenny. There is no fixed minimum; and the shortest message which it is possible to send—viz., one of three words. two of address and one of text—

costs only fourpence. On the other hand, a message of twelve words, which Mr Shaw Lefevre proposes to give us for 6d. only, would cost in Germany 8½d.

This principle of a fixed charge of 2d. or 3d. as a basis, with a charge for each word sent, is clearly a right one. The sending of every telegram involves the signalling of certain extra words, which are not paid for in any country—such as the name of the place where the telegram starts from, and the hour at which it was accepted. Moreover, the work of taking in the telegram and sending it out for delivery has equally to be performed with all telegrams; and the "fundamental charges," as the Germans term it, may be taken as representing the services performed for all messages alike. Another advantage which the plan has is, that it extends to the full the principle which lies at the root of "sixpenny telegrams"—viz., that the shorter the message the lower the price ought to be. There is no more magic in a minimum of twelve than in a minimum of twenty words; and we confess we should like to see this relic of an ancient superstition cast aside. Both the Germans and the Swiss (who have adopted the same principle as the Germans, though their *grund-tax*, or fundamental charge, and their word-rate are both different) have sworn that it is a superstition to suppose that a minimum number of words is essential. All that is necessary is that your rate, whatever it is, should not be so low as to make the carrying of telegrams a losing instead of a paying business, nor so high as to check the development of telegraphy.

In considering the question of a telegraph tariff, there are two chief elements to be taken into account:

one is the cost of conveying the telegram to its destination; the other is the average price which can be expected to be paid by the public for such telegram. The cost of conveying the average message of 1886 will, as already stated, be 8½d. This, we understand, may be lowered in subsequent years, by the still greater shortening of messages, to 8d. But this is the limit of reduction believed to be possible. Now, what will be the average price paid? Mr Shaw Lefevre tells us that, under our present system of charge, which encourages people to an unnecessary prolixity, the average number of words in the text of a telegram is seventeen. It is not certain that this average, being largely made up of words which would never be sent but for the idea that people have of obtaining their money's full worth, and which would indubitably not be sent the moment they had to be paid for, will be greatly reduced—probably to ten or eleven? Mr Shaw Lefevre also tells us that the addresses may be expected in future to average five words only. This would make the average of the future telegram fifteen to sixteen words, all told, yielding 7½d. or 8d. In other words, this expenditure would be greater than the revenue.

That this estimate is by no means unfounded, is proved by the cases already cited, of France, Germany, and Switzerland. If, on the Continent, the average length of the telegram has fallen to fourteen words, we are surely within the mark in estimating that it may fall to fifteen or sixteen here. Indeed it is quite within the bounds of possibility that, although a certain number of much longer messages than are sent on the Continent will continue to be sent in

this country, the overwhelming increase in the number of sixpenny telegrams may drag down the average to as low a point as that which Continental countries experience. If this were so—if 30 millions of telegrams were sent at an average cost to the nation of 8d., and an average cost to the senders of 7d.—there would be an annual deficit of £125,000, which, added to the present net revenue, which would then be lost, represents an annual loss to the country of nearly half a million sterling!

It must be remembered always that when the Government speak of the cost of sending a telegram, no interest on the telegraph capital, as many innocently imagine, is included in that cost. It is the net revenue of the telegraph department which goes to the payment of interest, and this net revenue has never been sufficient entirely to cover the interest. So that not only will the taxpayer have to pay this interest in the future, but he will also have to pay an additional sum in order that the sender of telegrams may have the advantage of telegraphing at an unduly cheap rate.

There has been much said on the subject of free addresses. As has been already intimated in these pages, we are the only people who allow addresses to go free; and whatever reasons may have weighed with those who originally instituted this freedom, no one who examines the question carefully can fail to see that, though such freedom might be possible under a system by which the minimum price paid secured a balance over and above the cost of conveyance, its *raison d'être* vanishes when once the principle of a word tariff—that everything sent over the wires, and that only, is paid for—is accepted. To retain freedom of address with the

new system would be to cumber it with the inelasticity of the old. As thus : A requires five words to express his address, whilst B requires only two. Is B to pay as much for his address as A ? Surely he should have the advantage of his short address, and be able to send three more words in his message. The work performed by the Post-office is the same in each case. The charge for doing it, therefore, should be the same.

No doubt the change of practice will be felt at first by persons sending what may be designated social telegrams, as distinguished from business telegrams, especially if the Post-office is hard in its views of what words in the address are to be charged for as single words. With a liberal method of counting, much if not all this dissatisfaction may be swept away. It has been suggested that every address should be regarded as containing four words ; but this would make the system inelastic, in the manner we have just described in speaking of free addresses. It would surely be far better to make all streets, roads, squares, crescents, &c., one word each ; all numbers of streets, &c., one word ; and all names of towns, villages, &c., one word. Then the cost of the addresses would be brought within such reasonable limits that few would grumble at having to pay for them.

A few examples will show this :

1	234	5	6
"Smith,	344	Tottenham	Court
1	2		3
7	8		

Road, London,"

which is by no means as long an

address as might easily be found, would, under the present system of counting, swallow up no fewer than eight of your twelve words ; whilst under the proposed system, it would only take four of them. Again—

1	23	4	5	6
"Smith,	16	Oak	Hill	Park,
1	2		3	
7	8			

Tunbridge Wells,"

would, under the present system, count as eight words, whilst under the proposed, it would count as four only.

1	23	4	5
"Smith,	16	Charles	Street,
1	2		3
6	7	8	

Berkeley Square, London,"

would now count as eight, then as five words only.

It is plain, however, from the facts which we have already placed before the reader, that if the proposed tariff of 6d. for twelve words is to be adopted, the hope of any such reduction in the addresses must be abandoned, seeing that already, without this reduction, it is to be feared that in a very short time the cost of the telegraph service will have outstripped its producing powers. The only hope of such a reduction would be in combination with a tariff somewhat higher than that at present contemplated.

We do not particularly recommend the adoption of the German rate, though its principle is undoubtedly sound ; and some modification of it would probably be the best solution of the difficulty. The Post-office authorities may be afraid of being overwhelmed with

¹ The figures written above the line represent the present, those under the line the suggested, method of counting.

telegrams at 4d. and 5d. Let them, then, keep to the idea of a fixed minimum, but give us only eight words, instead of twelve, for 6d., coupled with a liberal method of counting the addresses. It is true that such a sixpenny "social" telegram, which would, generally speaking, allow only of three words of message being sent in addition to the five of address, is not at all what the public expected. But then, apparently, neither is the twelve-word message, with seven or eight words used up in the address, which is the sixpenny telegram proposed by the Government, at all what was expected. We consider, however, that the public might well be content ; for it is remarkable what a number of short messages of the kind particularly contemplated by many who have advocated sixpenny telegrams can be framed in three or four words. "Shan't be home ;" "No dinner to-night ;" "Shall return late ;" "Don't come home ;" "Send latch-

key ; "Don't sit up,"—are examples which will readily occur to every one.

We fear it is too late now to hope that any change will be made in the direction we have suggested. All the pressure seems the other way. More concessions even than the Government has given are asked for ; and we have shown that the Government has already conceded too much. It is right that the telegraphing public should have cheap telegrams. Granted. But it is not right that they should have them, even if they clamour for them, at the expense of the country. And we would ask those who have it in their hands to decide this question, whether it would not be far better to give a smaller reduction of telegraph tariff than land us in a telegraph deficit ? Surely £11,000,000 sterling is enough to have paid for the boon of the telegraphs, without a further annual sum sunk in the same abyss !

CURIOSITIES OF POLITICS.

THE EVIL EYE ON THE LANDLORD.

It is the belief of many of us that political changes, once proposed, are sure to come about, provided only that they are sufficiently attractive to occupy the public mind for a lengthened period. Given a project that can take an enduring hold of the national fancy, and its being established is simply a question of time. The belief undoubtedly is supported by the outcome in 1832 of the agitation for reform, and by the repeal of the Corn Laws, which crowned the strenuous efforts of the League in 1846. But we should remember that agitations which ultimately succeed are more likely to make an impression on, and to be remembered by, the student of history, than those which end in nothing. The Chartist demand for annual Parliaments is little thought of, while the Catholic Emancipation—a much older story—is a political landmark.

These remarks have been suggested by reflection on the covetous glance which the confiscatory portion of our population are at this time casting on the land. Timorous people say that the spoilers have marked it for plunder, and will leave no stone unturned till they get it. Others, less panic-stricken for the moment, think that the danger may not be immediate, but that after opinion shall have had time to ripen, the land will be as surely doomed as the Irish Church or the close boroughs. Such are the predictions which many anxious persons are at this moment making, as they glance back at the early phases of those notable changes which

now epochs in our history. Perhaps if they were to go a little deeper into their subject,—if they were to contemplate the results not only of the efforts of such men as Brougham, O'Connell, or Cobden, but of those also who failed to make so deep a mark,—they might be less persuaded of the coming change. Lord George Gordon in the last century, Feargus O'Connor and Smith O'Brien in this, all represented and directed movements which appeared to be very popular, and likely to influence legislation; but they all met with failure and overthrow. Who is to warrant us that the excitement against the landlords may not die out as "No Popery" did, instead of establishing itself in our system like Free Trade?

If we look a little into the records of the past, we shall find that the rancour against owners of land is not altogether a new thing: it is but a modified form of an enmity which has been largely fomented against property continuously during the last hundred years. For some reason or other, it has not been the policy, or the caprice, of the confiscatory movement to turn an eye of desire upon the land until now; the fundholder and the capitalist had their turns first. In the early years of this nineteenth century, to rob the fundholder was a very favourite idea in some quarters. The chief part of the revenue, wrung from an overworked and necessitous population, was applied to meeting the claims of various creditors of the State. Only get rid of this charge, which used to be some

£36,000,000 yearly, and the commonwealth would at once undergo a transmutation "into something rich and strange." Taxes would be reduced one-half ; and not only would the poor man benefit by being eased of so much of his burden, but enterprise, freed from the hands which had been hampering and paralysing her, would expand as in a new spring and bear fruit, here a hundred and there a thousand fold, blessing the workman far more even than the abatement of tax. Here was a millennium, not only in sight, but at the commandment of our community, if only the hitherto abused people would rise in its majesty and decree that it should begin. What a prospect for groaning drudges !—

"No more dams I'll make for fish ;

Nor fetch in firing

At requiring,

Nor scrape trenchering, nor wash dish."

Nothing stood in the way of this alluring idea's realisation except the claims of bloated fundholders ; and who were they that the prosperity of a whole nation, the emancipation of men by the million, should be arrested on their account ? They toiled not, neither did they spin ; they simply opened their hands and received periodically from the State the price of corn and wine and oil for their sustenance and enjoyment. They were few and the people were many : let the few suffer instead of the many ; so should the greatest happiness of the greatest number be in great degree realised. Arguments were not wanting to prove that the public creditor, although his bond was not cancelled, had yet received already from the public purse more than the worth of it. Let the Legislature, then, extinguish his claim, and let the

nation be relieved of a gross incumbrance. This was, before it grew more familiar, called "being for the sponge," because the debts of the country were to be cancelled simply by expunging the whole obligation.

Fortunately there was in the nation at large an amount of caution sufficient to make it pause long and anxiously before resorting to the reckless expedient of applying the sponge. John Bull could not be readily persuaded to shut his eyes to consequences and defy his creditors. Yet, while he hesitated, younger and less wary communities, caught by the specious promises of the reformers, and being entirely destitute of honesty, plunged headlong into the snare that had been set for *him*. They wielded the sponge to some purpose, and the operation was now dignified with the name of "repudiation."

By this precipitancy of other peoples, there was afforded to our country men opportunity of learning to shave upon alien chins,—of watching how the practice which they had been urged to follow would affect experimentalists in whom they felt no very engrossing interest. And they had not long to wait for the results. Repudiation, as we all know, did not produce the felicity that was expected of it. Dishonesty was found to have been very bad policy, and after it were fain to retrace with shame their steps, and to return to the ways, if not to the principles, of honesty. Britain stood by and saw with her eyes the reward of the wicked. It was quite clear that repudiation would not pay. Its *quondam* advocates slunk back into obscurity ; the civilised world was completely disabused concerning this temptation ; the very idea

of repudiation died out, and left the restless members of our people at leisure for the reception of new theories.

Repudiation sunk, first into disrepute and then into oblivion. That form of spoilation was seen to be impracticable. Nevertheless, the desire to despoil somebody was as strong as ever it had been among the envious and unscrupulous. Desire turned itself now to the wealth of the capitalist, and thought to appropriate that. Many were the schemes devised for artificially forcing up wages, and for twisting profits out of the pockets of employers and placing them at the disposal of workmen. These schemes have not succeeded. Workmen, after long and bitter experience, have learned that the great interruptions to business, which they are able to bring about by combination, in general distress themselves far more than they do the masters; and, besides inducing temporary suffering, they permanently damage business, and so depress seriously the condition of those who join in them. During the long struggle, some of the truths regarding the wealth of societies have forced themselves on the attention of even the most violent advocates of plunder. They perceive at length that all the profits of capital, if forcibly diverted from capitalists, would yield at the moment but a sorry prey to each of those who would claim to share in them; and that the seizure of these profits would stop for an indefinite time the prosecution of business altogether, thus rendering thousands of them unemployed. So the proposed raid upon capital does not come to a head. The desire for it is as fervent as ever. But here, too, smart men are fain to defer a little to the perception that dishonesty is not good policy,

and we may assume that the slackening which we see in communistic raids on industrial capital is likely to become more noteworthy, and to disappoint the authors of them.

But, as if just invented and timed to meet the emergency, and to divert dishonesty into a new channel, comes the attack upon the land. A new school of prophets has opportunely sprung up, uttering their denunciations with a difference. "It is quite right," say these instructors, "to cherish undying enmity against property, and to confiscate it for the benefit of the many; only the sages who went before us have induced you to try and breach the strong-room, where it was in fact impregnable, and so caused you to waste your strength, time and ammunition. They were quite right in exciting your vengeance against funded property and against industrial capital. The turn of these possessions will come by-and-by, only you cannot break in through them. You have hitherto missed the vulnerable point, which we at length, profoundly learned in such matters, here declare to you. The landlord—the landlord is your real quarry."

The attack is thus wholly drawn off from the fundholder: it is much modified, and turned into a blockade, as it were, against the industrial capitalist; but against the landlord it is being pressed with the severest vigour. When we examine the arguments by which it is sought to justify this new direction of the war, they are found to be substantially the reproductions of those which had been used without effect against property in the public funds and capital used in business. The landlord has no right to his land, which is really the property of the whole people,

who were at some period robbed in order that landlords might fatten at their expense. Let the sovereign and long-abused people at once resume their own, and eject them who have usurped it.

The landlord is, according to the latest evangelists, the real and only obstacle to universal happiness. Eliminate him, and half the evils which afflict society will at once flee away; his baleful presence and influence will no longer hinder the benevolent energetic masses in their endeavours to help each other and themselves; labour will be not nominally only, but really, free; no more want, no more pauperism, no more lack of employment; prosperity and goodwill (except to the wicked landlords) all round. It is useless to offer any moral argument against this agitation. Those outside the movement require no convincing; the actors in it are not to be convinced in that way. They may nevertheless learn by experience, as did they who joined in the anabasis against public creditors.

The seizure of the land, simple as it is made to appear to us, will probably be not one whit more easy of accomplishment than the robbery of the fundholder. The present relations of the land to the mass of our people are so intricate, they twine so intimately through our whole system, that the convulsion occasioned by a forcible expropriation of the soil would be a revolution of the most dangerous character—one of which no man, at its beginning, could possibly foresee the end. Only just attempt to shake the existing scheme, and observe to what a distance, and through what countless channels, you will produce vibrations. Those warning vibrations will make Britain pause as she paused when in-

cited to defraud her public creditors. While she lingers it is quite possible that some State or colony of yesterday, being full of youthful ardour, may try the effect of "nationalizing the land." Teaching will then be by example, and future history may have to record how Great Britain learned another lesson from the wreck of some wilful Government, how she tried to forget that she had been near falling into the same pit herself, and how the "nationalising of the land" had suddenly dropped out from among her household words, and been shrouded in dictionaries and annals as an exploded folly.

Already there has been in Ireland a violent seizure of part of the profits derived from the land; but the robbery there has not yet been so thorough as to silence quacks who will still be bawling that the dose failed because it was not strong enough. For those, however, who do not scorn instruction, there is a great deal to be learned, as regards landlords, from the present state of Ireland. If landlords be the real and sole obstacles to the prosperity of the masses, and if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them be the riches of the working classes, then ought Ireland to be the great pioneer of prosperity, the first-fruits of a dispensation untainted by the upstree of landlords' influence. For, although landlords are still to be found in that island, yet they are there reduced to such poverty, and impotence, and insignificance, that humanity must find itself unshackled. Here then, we have the condition insisted upon by our last prophets and reformers as antecedent to the new golden age. Here we ought even now to see begun the blessed revolution.—

**“Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia
regna ;**

omnis feret omnia tellus.
Non rastros patietur humus, non vinea
falces :

Robustus quoque jam tauris juga solvet
arator."

But do the facts at all justify the philosophy? The landlords have been put down, but the people have not risen up (except in the sense which we particularise by the word "insurrection"). The removal of the incubus has not brought an awakening to vitality and health and vigor. If Ireland is to be our ensample of the benefits of landlord-baiting, let us trample upon no landlord while the world standeth; for great as may be the misery of countries where the landlord can yet oppress, a more exceeding weight of misery afflicts the isle where the landlord has ceased from troubling.

Though the land-agitation will probably not result in such a redistribution of property as its promoters intend, it will not be of

none effect, it cannot fail of evil consequences. Agriculture is already cruelly depressed by foreign competition. It wanted cherishing, not galling, in order that it might contribute its quota to the national wealth. Yet, while its difficulties are unprecedentedly great, the time is chosen for threatening and inciting to seize it by violence. This must crush out all enterprise from among landlords, who feel as if they were administering their properties with ropes round their necks. It must tend to multiply the disadvantages under which the cultivation of the soil is carried on, and seriously to reduce the resources of the whole community. We have wars and heavy taxes. When we speak with our enemies in the gate, it is with much confusion of face. Would it not be wise to stop the land-robbers, and put off the question of spoliation until some fortunate day when Great Britain may be thriving again, and may afford to occupy herself with hazardous speculation?

THE EMPLOYMENT OF CANT IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

It may be said as truly of canting as of cursing, that it will recoil on the head of him who may indulge in it. So common is the retribution, that plays, novels, anecdotes, and prints abound wherein much of the entertainment is caused by the discomfiture of persons who have stooped to the emission of cant, and whose cant has come back to shame and to afflict them. Gratiano is so delighted with the recoil of the whine about Daniel, that he says—

“ I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me
that word ; ”

but it makes a dreadful facer for the old usurer. Joseph Surface,

too, comes in for some very scaring thrusts, uttered originally from his own arsenal ; while Pecksniff and Heep are shown us by one of our great novelists eating leeks under merciless cudgels.

Hume tells us that canting was largely practised in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the Puritans in Scotland were the chief offenders in that way. But, taken in a broad sense, cant may hardly be said to be confined to any nation or to any subject. It seems to consist in inventing or using, with regard to its subject, words and phrases, with meanings different from what they ordinarily bear, or in connections where they are not

usually found. For example, Mr. Stiggins was fond of speaking of himself as a vessel, which word does not in the vernacular signify a man of any kind ; also Cromwell's people named their adversaries Amalekites and worshippers of Baal, which, to ordinary apprehensions, they certainly were not. Any pursuit which may have a fairly numerous company of votaries, may have also its cant phrases ; and thus cant and slang, thought not quite the same thing, are nearly related.

We do not propose, however, here, to examine into the exact nature or the different kinds of cant, so much as to point out that religious cant is a very low method of speech, and that educated men, who may condescend to resort to it to serve a temporary purpose, will probably afterwards find reason to wish that they had refrained from so degrading themselves. With the multitude cant phrases tell far more than sound arguments. They are passwords which indicate that speakers and hearers have fraternal confidences unshared by the profane outside world. There is an immense appetite for them in many shallow minds, strong in sentiment but weak in sense. And there is no doubt that they fall on the ears of melting listeners as honey glides upon the palate, or that they are an effective vehicle for instilling doctrines and prejudices into vulgar minds. So persuaded are wise and prudent men of the deluding influences of cant, that they will not condescend to the use of it. They condemn it, and reckon it an agency quite unworthy of them.

All cant is not intended to deceive ; but unfortunately deceivers oftentimes find cant a ready and powerful auxiliary. Many men have a natural disposition towards

uttering cant : these, generally speaking, are not manly or ingenuous persons ; they have an instinctive persuasion that, being through weakness of character little likely to obtain the favourable regard of mankind, they do well to beguile the weak of their good opinion by alluring speech.

Most of us must remember when the word " blood-guiltiness " was transferred from a verse in the Psalms of David to our political vocabulary. It was understood to characterise our annexation of the Transvaal, which we were thenceforth to regard as a great national transgression of which at length all saw the guilt, and which all now bewailed in a truly penitential spirit, except the reprobate persons who had led the nation into this crying iniquity. *They* were unrepentant and never to be forgiven ; while their virtuous and innocent successors, shocked by such wickedness, would put far from them all hateful and ignominious acts. It is to be presumed that this introduction of a Scriptural word into political debate—this cant—answered the purpose designed by its inventor. Numbers of un instructed sensitive persons were impressed to their hearts' cores by the happy phrase. The judicious grieved ; " the censure of which one, must, in your allowance, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others." But the speaker fancied that the word served his purpose indifferent well for the occasion ; and he is not one to let dread of future ill consequences stand between him and the advantage of the moment.

He learns nothing from mishaps ; all through his career he has had reason to regret his use of cant phrases ; yet of all his ventures in that direction, this perversion of the term " blood-guiltiness " was the most unfortunate. His ad-

versaries may fairly thank him now for teaching them that word ; in Hotspur's fashion they holloa "blood-guilty" in his ears when he lies asleep ; they keep his chagrin still in motion by starlings which can twitter "blood-guiltiness." How he must sicken at the sound !

It is a capital misfortune to this babbling personage that, with presumptuous self-righteousness, he delights to denounce in the eyes of others mores which, in his own eye bloated to hideous beams, may shortly astonish and disgust beholders. To him, of all men living, is applicable the reproof, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest : for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest doest the same things." Ay, the same things, but sixty or a hundred fold in quantity, notorious for their wantonness and injustice ; in many cases blackened by basest accompaniments. This man is *par excellence* the blood-guilty. There has not been for a generation any man standing where he now stands that has shed blood so profusely or so wantonly. Deficient of all the qualities which fit a man for active life, he has, through natural squeamishness at vigorous operations, through procrastinations, through want of clear purposes,—drifted into a sea of blood. And, unhappily, all the blood that he has shed has flowed to no purpose, for his bloody work is yet to do. He is still hurrying forward his victims, for we know not what object—still glutting the maw of death, because he knows no more of dealing with the forward and the bold than a woman or a monk.¹

But if we pass from the consid-

eration of the word "blood-guiltiness" to that of the occasion where it was used by David, we discover that the recoil upon the head of the canter has been a hundred times more crushing than is apparent to casual observation. David used the word in the agony of his contrition, after Nathan the prophet had been with him and said, "Thou art the man." His conscience told him that he had been guilty, not of blood only, but of the most treacherous and dastardly murder. He had given directions like this concerning one of his chief officers, a man of loyalty and devotion : "Set ye him in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die." These words so nearly describe the desertion and treachery which have recently stirred the whole British empire, that one cannot but think the most evil of evil geniuses was dominant on the day when this canting spirit went grubbing in the 51st Psalm for a stone to fling at his political opponents. The shot has recoiled with a fearful vengeance.

Not to dwell longer on this supreme instance, we may glance over the career through the last five years of the cant-loving pretender, and perceive that the efflux of unctuous phrases to which he condescended in 1880 has been weighing him down ever since, binding him hand and foot crippling his action, restraining his speech, and yet that, despite his vacillation, his timid ventures, and his mealy mouth, he has plunged so deeply into blood, crime and failure, that history must show him as a truly unhappy figure. Whatever he has denounced in others, that thing he has done with in-

¹ Napoleon wrote to his sister Caroline that her husband, Murat, had no more brains than a woman, and was weaker than a monk.

tensity ; whatever he has lauded and promised as a benefit to be conferred by himself, he has signally failed to effect. He is an impressive example of the unwisdom of pretension and censoriousness in general ; but more especially is he a danger-signal warning all men of the fatal consequences of emitting cant.

HOT AND COLD FITS OF THE NATION.

It is an everyday remark how apathetic the nation has been lately while calamities have been closing in on it from every side. Though our money has been wasted and our troops destroyed to no purpose in Egypt ; though the disasters have been clearly traceable to the incapacity of our rulers ; though the complications which perplex us in Europe and Asia as well as in Africa are equally due to careless and bad government ; yet the country does not stir itself to rescue the lives of its defenders, and its wealth, from stewards who have already so grossly misdealt with both, but callously commits more precious lives and more treasure to be misused by the same unworthy hands.

It seems, truly, a very perverse condition of things ; but there is no use in fretting and lamenting over it. The country is in one of its cold fits—that is all. Something—perhaps some very small provocation—will rouse it to sensitiveness ere long ; and then it is likely that there may be smarter public action than is good for us, or than we may altogether approve.

They who have watched the humours of our people must be aware that there are occasions when the least prick will startle them into sudden, and not always wise, action ; while there are periods of apathy when the temperament seems to have become phlegmatic, when hurricanes or earthquakes will produce hardly the least animation, — when an

alarm that we are drifting into a chaos amid “red ruin and the breaking up of laws” will not evoke an answer, but the event will be impassively awaited, and no hand and no voice raised to turn away the coming evil.

As an example of the over-lively mood of John Bull, we may refer to the sharp practice which was vented on Lord Palmerston's Administration when it attempted to make a law to restrain French assassins from using the United Kingdom as a resort where they might hatch plots against their own country, and load shells and torpedoes to be discharged against the French Emperor. There had been scarcely a growl to show that the Bill would be even objected to ; hardly any precaution had been taken against the action of opposition, so reasonable and so certain of acceptance seemed the measure which was proposed. And yet the British lion, being at the moment peculiarly irascible, arose suddenly in his might, rejected the Bill without ceremony, and manifested an utter indifference about the consequences of his act. Lord Palmerston pulled his hat over his eyes, and ceased for a season from his usual jauntiness, when he felt the sudden spring by which his labour had been brought to nought. The next day he and his colleagues resigned office. The Bill which roused this fierce indignation was just such a one as we are at present desirous that the Americans should pass to discourage and restrain

the dynamitards and other assassins who, in Transatlantic security, now plot and prepare demolitions for the injury of Great Britain. Why the lion got thus on the rampage, it is difficult to understand. He did not particularly admire the French Emperor, though the latter had been our ally in the Crimean war, and he was much piqued by the violent language of some French colonels who, enraged at our harbouring their political criminals, assumed a saucy and threatening attitude.

But the occasion was not one of serious danger to the nation. The Ministry, if it made a mistake in introducing the Foreign Conspiracy Bill (and it may fairly be questioned whether it did so or not), had been doing nothing else that could be complained of. It had been looking fairly well after the interests of the empire; it had not allowed us to be put to shame before our enemies; it had sacrificed none of our possessions or rights; and it had not involved us in perilous entanglements abroad. There was no accumulating record of ill-doing against it. And yet the punishment came, sharp, quick, and decisive; the Administration was snuffed out incontinently, and no chance left to them of recovering their places by submission and repentance. Comparison of this brisk dealing with the indifference which sometimes will allow the best interests of the empire to be made shipwreck of with scarcely a protest, suggests the proverb, "One man may steal a horse, while another may not look over a gate."

Another instance may be cited wherein the lion's paw came down rather with a capricious emphasis, although its stroke did not at the moment wreck a Ministry. The instance occurred in the year 1873.

Mr Gladstone's Administration devised a University Education Scheme for Ireland—not a clever nor a very judicious yet a measure, as one is fain to think, which might, with a little patience, have been worked into acceptable shape. It had some visionary clauses in it, which its authors might have been forced to give up. Everybody, Ministers included, was prepared to see it transformed; but it did not strike so directly at the welfare of the Empire that it was necessary to throw it out, neck and heels, and its authors after it, which would have been the natural effect of the precipitate action taken by the House of Commons. The Bill was read a first time, and received in such a manner as to leave a reasonable expectation that it would, after some modification, become law.

A week or two intervened between its introduction and the second reading. During that time dislike to it began and increased. It was nicknamed the "Gagging Bill," because, out of tenderness for Popish susceptibilities, it prohibited the use of certain histories and theological works as class-books. The prohibition was, of course, very silly, and such as no practical statesman would have proposed; but there was ample opportunity for eliminating this from the measure, had the House been intent only upon framing an Act that would suit the temper of the time. Yet somehow the people's representatives, and, one may suppose, the people also, had waxed very arbitrary and imperative before the second reading came about. The debate had not proceeded very far before Ministers offered any terms. They would concede anything, alter anything—the House might take the Bill as a blank folio, to be

inscribed according to its pleasure—if only *some* Bill could be passed and made law. The offer had no favourable effect whatever. The House was in no humour for compromise: it had been violently angered by the Gagging Bill, and positively refused to have it in any form or at any price. It was thrown out. Mr Gladstone, according to custom, canted and whined about a still small voice; but he had to tender his resignation immediately, and it was only through the disinclination of the Opposition to take office that the Administration did not then come to an end. So the storm passed; without a vindictive effort it probably would not have passed away: yet why the country was so eager at that moment for sacrifice, no one to this day has been quite able to divine.

To see the British lion in these murderous humours, when he will quarrel on the ninth part of a hair, and rage till he has made havoc of something, and then again to see him as he is now, torpid, callous, indifferent to stabs or kicks, looking on unruffled, while his patrimony is being dissipated, his honour sullied, and his rights made away with, makes one suppose that he must be a hibernating animal, coming to his dangerous vigour periodically and for short periods, when it is well to beware of him, but passing most of his days in a dull condition, moved by no loss, alarmed by no danger, roused by no injury. His present

lethargy, though exceptional, is not without parallel. Any one who may take the trouble to glance over the history of England, during the period when we were waging the war which was to end in the loss of our American colonies, may perceive something very like the insensibility and apathy which astonish observers to-day. Mismanagement could not have been greater than that which Lord North's Cabinet displayed. They employed incompetent generals, fomented the rage of the combatants, and yet starved the war. They kept back information, they concealed defeats and vaunted them as victories, they scandalously wasted the national resources: they were detected in doing these things, they were universally blamed, and yet the suffering country could not summon resolution to push these worthless rulers from their stools.

It was true that in those days incapable Ministers were upheld by influences which do not exist at present. The Court was very powerful, they could win votes through an immense patronage, and by making themselves friends of the Lords they could largely control the Commons.¹ Yet with all these things in their favour, they could not have excused their glaring misdoings, or retained the power of persisting in them, if the country had with any earnestness denounced their iniquities. Nothing vigorous was done. The people lay quite supine, knowing that great calamities were impending.

¹ The press has been greatly exercised of late by Members of Parliament who have not had the courage of their opinions— who have voted in opposition to their declared sentiments and conviction. These weak brethren have been spoken of as a modern species, the product of the caucuses. Any one who may choose to examine the Parliamentary proceedings in the days of Lord North's premiership they may be found in brief in Walpole's 'Last Journals') will soon satisfy himself that the *lâcheté* at which we are so scandalised to-day is by no means without precedent. Political human nature is, one fears, always pretty much the same: there will be some high-minded men, but a crowd of mercenary satellites.

ing, but choosing to let all go to the devil rather than lift a hand to stop the ruin. When the mischief was done, when America was lost beyond hope of recovery, when our arms had been disgraced and our means squandered, then, and not till then, opinion stood up strongly enough to overthrow this contemptible Government. One vigorous push, made in the early days of the war, might have averted all our calamities. Capable statesmen would have come to terms with the Colonies before all was irremediably embroiled, or, if they had decided to wage war, would have carried it on with vigour. Lord North's ministry understood neither how to make peace nor make war. They were allowed to continue in their ruinous course because Britain was in a cold fit.

The cold fit is on us again now. We are in as unfortunate a condition as can well be imagined. Unquestionably this condition is due to the incapacity and perversity of her Majesty's Ministers. They have ruined Ireland. They have brought shame and damage on us in South Africa. We are engaged in an unnecessary and meaningless war in Egypt, which has already been attended with immenseslaughter, and which bids fair to be more bloody than it has been. Our enterprising general, whom we sent single-handed into the midst of the danger, has been basely deserted, and has died a hero's death. We have been too late with every movement that we have made. No European nation is friendly to us. With Russia we stand on the very brink of war, the dangerous situation being due altogether to the neglect of their duty by the Government in past years. Our trade is declining. Our revenue is failing. And we are

taxed more heavily than we been for many years.

If any one of the calamities above mentioned be compared with the French Conspiracy Bill, it will be found to outweigh that Bill heavily; how much more, then, must the sum of them outweigh it! Yet that astounding accumulation of injuries does not move the country to action. Are we waiting as in Lord North's days, until the empire has been actually rent asunder before we displace the authors of these troubles?

More than once we have heard it said that the country expected just now to in in foreign or colonial cause the whole of the working class are intent on con and on changes in home designed to improve the tion: when these shall be effected they will be ready again to little for our foreign But unfortunately these matters will not wait. They for solution; and it does not with us to say when they shall be dealt with. We must look to them when they present themselves, or encounter fearful consequences for neglecting them. And our working people should recollect that the loss of our dominions and of our trade is not a subject which can be separated from that of work and wages. Lop off a member from the empire, close a market, and you destroy the source from which a proportion of the wages of the country is derived. Let us lose India, or any part of India; let us have India only hampered and occupied by a severe war,—and it will soon be discovered how intimately connected the affairs of Calcutta and Bombay are with those of Manchester and Birmingham. We are heavily taxed now; we shall be taxed more heavily if

this Egyptian campaign be suffered to drag longer as it is now doing. Heavy taxes must paralyse industries. Therefore these foreign considerations, which seem to have such a far-away operation, are really of more importance to the working-men in London and Sheffield than all the confiscatory measures that can be devised, or all the interferences with trade, for the purpose of giving advantages to the artisan. It is of no use to decree the confiscation of capital or profits when both have been made to disappear: the oyster will have gone, and it will be idle to make laws about the shells!

Day by day the public prints contain sad information concerning the numbers of the working classes that languish in our cities and towns unemployed. These unfortunates are victims of the incapacity of the Government. They are out of work because our foreign affairs are so feebly and unintelligently conducted,—because there is such dread of further serious detriment to commerce and industry, that capitalists decline to embark their fortunes in business until they can feel some confidence in the Ministers who direct our concerns. Their numbers will undoubtedly increase unless we should have a change of Government. Leading men, to whom they have appealed for advice and help are suggesting emigration—a sad finish this to all the flattering hopes that have been held out to workers. To emigrate is a serious thing to a workman, however little he may be encumbered; to a man with a wife and family it is a step to be most carefully considered. We

should say that the plunge into the emigrant-ship should not be taken until at least an attempt had been tried to make things better at home by displacing the Ministers who have brought us to this pass. Men who are already destitute of money, and of the means of earning money, cannot risk much if they bring about a change; and a change which may secure them bread to eat must be of far more consequence to them than all the ransoming of property or nationalisation of land about which agitators rant.

It is five years now since the present Government took office, promising peace, light burdens, and most beneficial reforms. We have had war ever since, we are cruelly taxed; let the unemployed and the workers at half-time and low wages bear witness of how much they have been benefited by reforms. There can be no question, after this long experience, that the promises made in 1880 have not been kept, and that the country is being rapidly ruined, instead of being guided into ways of prosperity and peace. And yet the sufferers cannot rouse themselves sufficiently to stop the downward course by overthrowing the cause of it. Thus the evil goes forward, our artisans intent upon confiscation and a redistribution of property, while they allow the property itself, which they are so anxious to appropriate, to be consumed and wasted by weak and stupid government. The cold fit continues. The hot fit will infallibly come again—but probably not till it is too late for prevention, and too late, too, for a prompt and thorough cure.

THE IRONY OF KISMET.

If anything has seemed certain for the last seven or eight years regarding the power and importance of European and Asiatic States, it is that Turkey has dwindled, and been forced so low as to have become of utter significance. Misgoverned, beaten, bankrupt, the Ottoman Empire has continued to exist, not because it was able to maintain itself, but because its extinction, the gap that it would leave, threatens to be so inconvenient, that the presence of the exhausted state is preferred to the unknown ills which might present themselves if it were not. So Europe has agreed that there shall be a Turkey on sufferance—a shorn, contemned, impecunious, and submissive Turkey. The Ottoman State has been her own enemy in the first place; but the nations have been hostile to her too, and very forward in hostility has been Britain of late years, denouncing and reviling her, and setting her enemies upon her. Nobody in these islands thought, probably, that Turkey could ever again be of any account; she was only a thing to thank God on.

But, somehow, as if to teach us how valueless are our dispositions and forecasts, and how enduring are great national tendencies, we see Turkey, not by any action of her own, but by the operation of forces which none of us can control, raising her head once more as a nation not utterly insignificant—as one whose alliance may be well worth securing. Such a state of things might easily have been foreseen, if we had not been wilfully and obstinately blind to the perception of it; for the elements out of which it has arisen are neither new nor hard to be dis-

covered. Turkey has a natural enemy who is also England's natural enemy and rival. She (that is, Turkey) is conveniently situated, and possesses many facilities—among the rest a numerous and brave army—for making herself felt on that enemy's frontier, if she had but the sinews of war wherewith to make her other advantages available: but these sinews she has not.

On the other hand, England, having the same natural enemy, cannot for geographical reasons, easily make an impression on that enemy's frontier. Though she possesses money, ships, arms, ammunition, stores, and brain-power to direct an attack, she is short of the man-power, without which all her other qualities are unavailing. She has got just what Turkey wants. Turkey has got just what Britain wants. Together they can assail, with excellent chance of success, their common foe. Thus, in this regard, Turkey is the complement of England. These things being so, are not the two nations pressed by a power of gravitation, as it were, to act together? The instinct of self-preservation must impel both of them in that direction. We have Russia at the very gates of British India; Turkey has Russia on more than one frontier, watching only, as Turkey well knows, a favourable opportunity of taking another slice of the Ottoman Empire, perhaps Constantinople itself.

The Turkish army, paid, clad, armed, and partly officered by the British, could attack Russia on the coasts of the Black Sea and on the Armenian frontier. This would weaken, perhaps paralyse, the Russian advance on Afghanistan,

and probably result in great advantages to both of the allies. The arguments for union are so patent and so strong that, sooner or later, it can hardly fail to take place. Objections to it there will be in plenty, but these will give way before an obvious common interest. The vile Turk ! The abhorred Turk ! Yes ; he is not altogether nice. But we Britons have at present great poverty of friends, and poverty makes one acquainted with strange bedfellows. This seems to be our fate whether we like it or not—to fight again alongside of the Turk.

How we execrated and threatened the Turk some six or seven years ago ! How we patted the Russians on the back, and bade them go and punish the hated Mussulmans, praying that God might go with them ! We allowed ourselves to run wild with indignation at the so-called Bulgarian atrocities, as if the Turk had been a monster blackening and villifying the lives of surrounding populations, his innocent and gentle neighbours. We have since discovered that he, if not what we could wish him, is, at any rate no worse than Montenegrins, Servians, Bulgarians, and even Russians. They are all savages together ; but the Turk is the savage who can be of most service to us. It is the Turk's good fortune that these things are so. It is the irony of Kismet.

A remittance from the British exchequer will set in motion in an incredibly short time a brave and obedient army already within measurable distance of the enemy's frontier. All the heroic acts of Gazi Osman and Gazi Muktar may be repeated on Russian crests, with this difference—viz., that whereas in 1877 these leaders performed their exploits in spite of the most

meagre transport, shortness of pay and provisions, deficient ammunition, and an almost entire want of modern appliances, they would now operate well furnished in all these respects. Let one only suppose what a boon it would be to the Turkish soldier to receive regular pay and his daily ration ! On such terms he will not only fight bravely, but he will fight cheerfully. He would have a chance of winning such as has not fallen to him for many a year ; and let him once begin to win—let him experience the glow of success—and he will assuredly take his charge out of the Russians. We have half-pay officers and young men in plenty already sufficiently instructed, or capable of being sufficiently instructed, to partly officer the Turkish battalions, so that the latter may be brought up to the requirements of modern warfare. The movement will give employment to numbers of our idle youth, and give us the almost ready-made army which we require, with a way open by which to launch it on the foe. Surely, then, the despised and execrated Turk has something to offer us in our need. If the lion once helped the mouse thirty years ago (we will say nothing of the leonine freaks during the last ten years), the mouse has got his chance at last, and may "come out strong" now, as Mr Tapley used to say, in aid of the hampered lion. Whether Turkey may demand something besides revenge for the very material aid which her fortune enables her to place at our disposal cannot now be divined ; but we must not grudge her any reasonable advantage. We must compose our faces as well as we can to do the behest of circumstances. We must take our tonic without grimacing. It is Kismet.

But to suppose the nation to be

never so clearly alive to the inevitable call to hark back on the Turk, how is our Premier ever to accept the decree of fate,—how is he ever to school his wayward and irrepressible tongue, so that he may take the good which the gods provide? How can he, after all his bitter sayings and doings, even in the direst need receive help from the foully maligned Turk? How can he have the face to do it? He has backed up Russia against the Turk. He has exhorted Europe to drive out the Turk bag and baggage. How can he ever accept aid from a Power which has been the subject of his bitter invective, of his most rabid denunciation? Surely, even if Britain should be driven to strike hands with the Turk, Mr Gladstone must efface himself and get out of the way, in order that his followers, in making the new alliance, may not be confounded by recollection of his injurious language! No; this mode of arguing has no force whatever in regard to Mr Gladstone. He has the face to say or do anything at all which may for the moment sort with his own interest. If it will temporarily stave off disgrace and loss of place from himself to foregather with the Turk, all his professions and invectives notwithstanding, he will certainly take the Mussulman to his bosom as affectionately as if it were Bradlaugh himself. No inconsistency, no

eating of his own words, I have been beyond his achievement. His own interest was to be satisfied, and we may rest satisfied that nothing of the kind ever will be allowed to interfere with the gratification of his desires. Of course reconciliation with the Turk will not be pleasant. Mr Gladstone has to submit to an adverse fortune, which even his practised spirit will probably find very galling. But retribution seems to have set in upon him just now. He has been sowing the wind for five years, and he has got at last a great whirlwind harvest. His sin has found him out. It is *Kismet*.

The meaning of the vast breach made by the Ottoman Turks into Europe will not be comprehended in this age. It is one of the great mysteries of history. They had a mission, no doubt, and the object of it will be accomplished. They are so placed in the world that the suppression of them is a very hard problem, and that in spite of their weakness and misgovernment they must at certain seasons be of some account among the nations. Wise statesmen will not fret over the consideration whether that is quite agreeable to them,—whether it is just what they would have chosen. They will recognise the Turkish Empire as a patent, if a difficult, fact, and endeavour to make the best of things as they find them.

A FORGOTTEN HOUSEHOLD WORD.

How curiously “the silver streak” has vanished from among our household words! The time was—it is hardly fifteen years ago—when this expression was understood to convey in little a whole chapter of circumstances, all strongly favourable to the security, the

peace, and the continuous prosperity of these islands. “Happy England!” was the apostrophe forced from admiring minds who had had the privilege of contemplating the innumerable blessings which the streak was to insure to us. What has become of this

fabric of a vision? The streak runs, of course, very much as it has done for ages past; but the security, the peace, the prosperity, where are they? The reality is unfortunately a very different sort of thing. For instead of these alluring fancies we have a state of continuous war, alarm for the safety of our capital, military writers urging the turn-out of our citizens *en masse* for the protection of our hearths and homes, crushing taxes, failing trade, forced idleness of our working population. One can understand full well why the authors of the silver-streak phantasma should find it convenient to be reticent about it just now; but there is no reason whatever why persons whose hands are clear of the cheat should refrain from calling John Bull's attention to the shameful artifice by which he was lulled into a false security.

The silver-streak trick is entitled to a place among the *Curiosities of Politics* because it is shrewdly suspected to have been an invention of a notorious dealer in phrases who is largely responsible for the events, diametrically opposed to those guaranteed by the streak, which "Happy England" has had to undergo. It seems a wonderful contradiction that the simple believer in quiet inoffensive home-life, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," should be found wrangling and striving all over the earth, making light not only of streak, but of seas and oceans, when they stand between him and his opponent, embroiled in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa, without a friend in the world. Yes; but if we remember that the silver-streak theory was put forward to serve a temporary purpose, and to be put aside when that purpose was served, there will be less to marvel at in the vari-

ance between prospectus and outcome.

Happy England, at present, instead of having all her innocent regards concentrated within the limits of her four seas, enjoys the inexpressible felicity of being governed by Mr Gladstone—a very different thing. We pointed out in these papers, a year or two since, that Mr Gladstone, being of the nature not of a necessary of life but of a luxury, would have to be paid for at a luxurious price. There have been some shadows cast before already in the shape of income-tax, but this year we shall probably have such an instalment of the little bill as will show us the terms on which "the first statesman of this or of any age" will condescend to occupy himself with our affairs. Paying away heavy sums of money is never pleasant, even when fair value has been received for them; but in our case, it is to be feared, we are going to pay for positive losses and injuries, and to pay through the nose.

Did not somebody—a seer more worthy of credit than the silver-streak quack—predict that Mr Gladstone would shake the empire to its centre? Well, we are vibrating all over in a most alarming way, and unhappily, a majority of us appear not to discern what the throes all mean. They will not stop the quakings that are going on at their expense. There has been plenty of time in which to judge of the real course of things, because Mr Gladstone has been in office now five years, and a survey of his achievements not only fails to discover any good that he has done, but leaves us perplexed as to the evil—uncertain when we may know the worst. And he is allowed to flounder on.

He has brought so many fresh troubles upon us during the last three years, that the Irish muddle reads like quite an old story. And yet it is not old nor past; we must hear more of it before the cessation of other troubles will leave us at all at leisure to return to its weary tangle. Meanwhile, the piece of botched work, his Irish performance, is worthy of remembrance as part of Mr Gladstone's contribution to the happy England of the silver streak.

The Premier, before he had quite reduced Ireland to her present condition, waged a very discreditable war, and retreated after receiving a considerable check, in South Africa, when Boers had invaded British territory. It must have occurred to him while he was there disgracing us that the frontiers of the British Empire consist of a vast number of *streaks*, not all silver ones, and that the boundaries of this little island form by no means the limits of British interests and anxieties. Before that Transvaal scandal was fully developed, he had us involved in a war in Egypt which has lasted three years, growing every year more expensive, and showing no sign that its conclusion is approaching. This war, too, has been full of scandals. Happy England!

Even the Egyptian complication, however, is exceeded in its inauspicious character by the blundering and worse than blundering—by the wilful inattention to British interests—which has caused us to stand at disadvantage, face to face with Russia, on the borders of Afghanistan. We are preparing against invasion, but the silver streak is no defence. The enemy is not coming to us by way of the sea. We stand almost without a friend in the world, and the impending

war is one of the gravest that our empire has ever had to face.

To us of the Conservative party who did what we could, while there was yet time, to avert the horrible struggle, thought of this war is sad enough; but what must it be to those who, deluded by words of peace and the promise of light burdens, have been instrumental in upholding the Minister who has brought affairs to this pass! Hideous in his war-paint, stained with blood from head to heel, he can no longer keep up the smooth fancies about retrenchment and universal goodwill. His veil is off, and all men may now see to what a prophet they trusted.

“There, ye wise saints, behold your
Light, your Star,—
Ye *would* be dupes and victims; and
ye *are*.
Is it enough? or must I, while a
thrill
Lives in your sapient bosoms, cheat
you still?”

That is a question of immense moment at the present time. Have the deluded ones been led far enough on the paths of shame and ruin? Will they shake themselves free of the destructive influence, or will they postpone the confession of their fault until the storm of blood, which now only impends, shall have burst upon us and upon Europe and Asia? There is no magic streak which can give us security. If we would escape, we must look for capable heads and firm hearts. Every year as it comes finds us involved in darker troubles than before. Every year up to the present it has seemed to us that the cup was full,—that the nation would endure no more tampering with its honour and interests. Yet the word that can save us is not spoken.

SOCIAL SCHISM IN IRELAND.

One of the most curious phenomena in modern British politics is the complete dissociation which we see between the masses of the Irish people and the substantial and educated classes, from among whom might be expected to come their guides and teachers. It must have puzzled many a student of Lever and other popular Irish novelists to find an absence not only of the clannish devotion and absolute self-effacement which have been shown to us as characterising the dependent classes, but of even the slightest reciprocation of feeling or of obligation. Where do we ever find in real life a Danny Mann, a Mickey Free, or a retainer like that poor Joe who spent his last breath in executing a view-halloo to gratify his chief's unfeeling fancy? According to the accounts which reach us, the substantial classes do not exercise the slightest influence over the lower orders—they have lost touch of them altogether. Not that the people do without leaders. There are none in the world to whom chiefs are more necessary—they are so fond of oratory and of combinations. But the leaders certainly do not come now from among the old feudal or blue-blooded houses. A ticket-of-leave man or a mongrel from America is accepted, where a Milesian of twenty quarterings would not find a listener.

Probably this severance between natural leaders and natural followers is attributable to faults on both sides. The lords of the soil cannot have descended to such a depth of helplessness and insignificance without some grievous neglect of opportunities (to use no stronger term) on their part. Perhaps it was a sense of this neglect, and

not a mere enjoyment of their miserable case, which animated Mr Bright when he pointed with such relish to "landlords flying for their lives." Let the fault lie where it may, the severance is a fact much to be deplored. If the natural leaders could in any degree regain their ascendancy, something would be secured in the direction of civilisation and order. What is wanted is social amalgamation, not political change. This truth is not perceived by the Irish in general—at any rate, it is not attended to ; there are so many agitators and other adventurers both in Ireland and in Britain who live and thrive by keeping Irish society distracted. Yet to the impartial observer it must be apparent that our political tinkering only makes matters worse ; and that if good is ever to come, it must grow out of some social reunion. It may seem most absurd to speak of such a reunion while the rabid rancour of the lower classes against the higher is daily furnishing so many tales of violence and mutiny. Yet, if nobody will risk a word on the subject for fear of being laughed to scorn, one great means of amelioration will be lost sight of altogether—which is certainly not desirable, however unpromising the prospect of healing may at present look. Unless the Irish pictures drawn for us by masters in fiction be simply and wholly untrue, there is a deep fountain of clannish veneration in the Irish character which, if it could ever be made to flow in natural channels again, might tend to tranquillise that unhappy land.

This is a generation of missions, —missions every whither—to the heathen, to the fallen, to the ig-

norant, to the intemperate, to the heedless, to the criminal. Is it absolutely impossible that a mission to reclaim and reconcile the disaffected Irish could have any success? Certainly it would start most disadvantageously if it should proclaim hostility to any of the favourite ideas by which the Irish mind is at present poisoned. English oppression, home-rule, no rents, may be subjects never adverted to, and yet a good deal may be done through other, and seemingly unconnected, agencies, to dispose the mind towards ways of peace. The movement which Father Matthew originated and sustained is an example of what has been here suggested. It had nothing whatever ostensibly to do with the cries and questions which were rending society; and yet no one will deny that it did for the time compose and divert the thoughts from the ever-gnawing political griefs, and induce a healthier condition of the national mind.

The missionaries should be, undoubtedly, the banished lords, the batonless chiefs, the disinherited princes of the Irish name. The service is one of trouble, danger, and at first probably of small reward. Yet the hereditary chiefs are they who would gain by any success that might ensue, and who are reflected on now by reason of the abnormal situation in which they stand. Efforts of theirs to win the ears of their countrymen in Ireland would most likely be disappointing unless they should chance to be men of special ability, or they could hit on a banner as attractive as Father Matthew's. But in Britain or in the colonies the goodwill of the Irishman is more accessible than it is at home. There, if any would lay themselves out to court and to instruct him,

an impression might, with perseverance and patience, be made, the effects of which might spread in time to Erin herself. Whether men of ancient line have sufficient fortitude to undertake the weary business, which must be for a long time toiled in against the bill, is much to be doubted. Still they are the men who should be able to make a good impression if any can.

"*Viri molles aditus et tempora notant;*"

and to them of right belongs the adventure, which, difficult though it be, they ought not to transfer to others.

There probably never was, since the world began, a parallel state of things to that which is now to be seen in Ireland. Revolutions of course there have been in plenty; but they have been in other cases carried out to the extent of establishing (for good or for ill) a new state of things. In Ireland, however the revolution is by the power of the United Kingdom stopped short of violent seizures of goods and offices; but the protecting power which does not tolerate a complete revolution, does not, on the other hand, heartily uphold the state of things which revolutionists desire to overthrow. It favours revolution until it is coming to extremities, then it steps in and forbids the final catastrophe.

The weakness and incapacity of the Government are, however, additional proofs that those Irishmen who, in the nature of things, ought to lead, should do something for themselves. They have been treated with great cruelty and injustice, and England has stood supinely by and seen the injustice done; but, possibly, she would not have been so indifferent if she had seen Irishmen of birth and property a little more ready to help themselves.

Whatever little energy they showed was expended in the direction of resisting unjust legislation, and of forming associations avowedly hostile to the masses of the people. What is here advocated is, that they should take the field as the people's leaders. Irishmen, who, by their merit, have brought honour upon their native land, must surely have some influence with their countrymen; and, be this little or be it great, they ought to use it for good. A distinguished soldier or sailor, a successful pleader or author, an artist, a keen sportsman, a traveler, might find plenty to say to his countrymen which, without trenching on the distracting fields of politics and religion, would find a ready and appreciative audience. And thus might be begun some amicable correspondence which may result in time in complete *rapprochement*. Traitors and low adventurers, exciting to violence and sedition, can win the Irish; why should not educated and talented men be able to do the same? Because, as we shall be told, the subject makes all the difference: they love to hear of outrage and rebellion, of wrongs and vengeance, and will be preached to about these by low fellows when they would not tolerate the most gifted man on any other subject. We, however, decline to believe that there is only *one* subject on which Irishmen can be interested. There are many non-political themes on which it would be possible to rivet their attention, and through which they might be beguiled of their goodwill.

This exhortation is, as was said above, a mere venture, and intended only as a hint. If nothing in the direction which it recommends be practicable, no great harm can have been done by so gently stir-

ring the question; and if anything, though never so little, may be done with effect, it would be a dereliction of duty to hold one's peace. It is abundantly plain that hope of amelioration through legislation there can be none as long as the present Government may hold office. They have only intensified the elements of strife which, before their day, were threatening the commonwealth. The more, then, help from without fails, the more willing should true Irishmen feel to fall back upon and put forth their own best efforts—not to be overcome of evil. There must be seven thousand men left who have not gone wild on political subjects; and of these may be made a leaven that shall soften many minds until a great company be leavened.

As the beginning of a *rapprochement* such as we have been advocating, nothing could be imagined of greater promise than the visit to Ireland of the Prince and Princess of Wales, which, as we go to press, is proceeding so satisfactorily. The event is most auspicious, and will, let us hope, be followed up by persons who, if they come far behind their Royal Highnesses in influence, may yet tread the same path with excellent effect. Loyalty is not dead—that is clear; but it requires to be led into a new and a proper channel. The Royal personages can be received and listened to with every token of loyal affection without allusion being made to vexed political questions, and that, too, in regions which were supposed to be entirely under control of the agitators. It has been a brave and a successful progress; and it has met with the success which its courage deserved. It is a hint to the wise.

THE MINISTRY OR THE COUNTRY : WHICH SHALL WE SAVE ?

Every Briton understands without coaching why Mr Gladstone's Administration must avoid a war with Russia at any price which it may be possible to make this country pay. The very fact of actual war must absolutely crush the reputation of the British Government, which therefore instinctively endeavours, by every expedient known to it, to put off the coming collision. By every expedient known to it, we have said,—because the Government would appear to be ignorant of the one means by which the question at issue may be, or might have been, most readily solved—namely, that of taking up a clear and definite position, maintaining it immovably, and by standing thoroughly prepared for any result which such firm attitude might entail.

Lord Beaconsfield, while he was in office, foresaw, with the prescience of a true statesman, the struggle which must inevitably occur somewhere on the frontier of British India, whenever the Russians should be able to make their way thither. He took important steps for the attainment of British security in such a case, and he projected further measures. He had secured Candahar, and had decided upon connecting it with British India by a railway. His plans, if they had been carried out, would probably have enabled us to speak with our enemies in the gate at this moment without confusion,—at the least, they would have given us every possible advantage of position and of preparation, and have left us no ground for self-reproach in any event. The present Administration decided, soon after acceding to

office, to reverse the precautionary acts of their predecessors, to retire from our points of vantage, and to leave our destiny entirely to the chapter of accidents. The crisis has come. We are altogether unprepared for it. In proof of what we advance, we refer our readers to the clear and convincing letters published in the 'Times' newspaper during March and April by Lieutenant-General Sir E. B. Hamley. These communications have been justified by events, as far as events have gone. The letter of 18th April shows plainly what we surrender if we allow the Ameer to give up Penj-deh. We shall by so doing enable two columns of the Russians to advance by the valleys of the Kuskh and Herj-Rud, and to "maintain throughout perfect co-operation and communication." These letters contain not only valuable information, but warnings also, from an expert, which the nation would do well to take to heart. The Government sees, no doubt, that it is condemned already in the moment when hostilities fairly commence. No wonder, then, that by all the many shifts which it is so fond of, it should be endeavouring, heart and soul, to avert, during its lifetime, the sentence on itself which a war will involve.

So it is clear enough why the Ministry should be willing to pay, ruinously to the nation, for peace. What is by no means clear—what it is most difficult to understand—is why the nation should pay ruinously in order that the Ministry may escape perdition. That is a curiosity in politics.

We write with full knowledge that, whether we parley or fight, we must do either at a great disadvantage; for (to say nothing for

the present of former and deliberate acts contrary to the best interests of the nation) it is certain that within the last few weeks our adversaries have been allowed to encroach on us so as to give them a most appreciable ascendancy in the disputes which are yet to come—an ascendancy moral and strategical. But our position is becoming every day worse; and the price we shall have to pay for temporary peace, or the severity of the alternative war, increases in geometrical proportion to the lapse of time.

It has always been a boast of the party which follows Mr Gladstone, that it possesses the secret of keeping this country in profound and perfect peace. Wars, it says, are the games of unprincipled Tory administrations, who undertake them, not because they are necessary, but because they favour party views. Single-minded Liberals, who love peace for its own sake, will always steer the country clear of quarrels and warfare. Whether Mr Gladstone has lost his wand; whether the wand, being still with him has lost its power; or whether the whole story about preserving peace was a wilful delusion,—certain it is that we have been vexed with wars ever since that minister of peace took our affairs in hand—a sufficiently damaging fact for his capacity or his honesty, one of the two. He has on more than one occasion with difficulty escaped the censure of the House of Commons; and he has not escaped the censure of consistent and impartial men. Lord Salisbury has pointedly and effectively described our condition under his rule. In acknowledging an address towards the end of April, his lordship says: “Our prospects darken every day, and our destinies are at the mercy of the irresolute purposes of a divided Cabinet, whose existence is only prolonged

by the partisan fidelity of a majority, of which one-half disapproves their policy, and the other half loudly censures their conduct of affairs.”

Two things, then, are in the highest degree to be dreaded: 1st, that he will (though not perhaps instantly) flounder into war with Russia; 2d, that by the time war is fairly declared, he will have been tricked and bullied out of more than the whole stake originally contended for. And these two things do not of themselves show our whole danger. We have an ally in this quarrel, the Ameer of Afghanistan. Mr Gladstone has acquired a somewhat evil notoriety by a readiness to desert our allies; and things point very persistently to the conclusion that the Ameer is to be deserted as others have been. For to speak of the dishonour of this, which requires no exposition, we must suffer very material loss if the military power of the Afghan State be turned against us. This is a most imminent danger concerning which the country ought to stir itself immediately.

The dread of war itself has naturally caused the dread of preparing for war; for with what face can that overseer make provision who assures us that armaments will never be wanted? He might, it is true, if he were prudent, make assurance doubly sure, by being at any rate secured against an untoward turn of events. But it is by no means Mr Gladstone's practice to take a bond of fate. He hazards all upon one cast, and when that fails him down he goes. It never seems to strike him that the confidence and arrogance which the enemy cannot fail to acquire through his irresolution and refining are formidable hindrances to composition of quarrels. It is always to be desired

that your enemy should respect you. We find that our adversary, whatever may have been the mind in which he started with his bold robbery, now feels supreme contempt for us, and is impressed with the conviction that he can beat and humiliate us. He may turn out to be in error, but he will certainly fight none the worse because he has been made to believe in his ability to overcome us.

Overcome us in the field he will not. After suffering, perhaps, some initial defeats, and after a bloody and tedious war, in which we shall be compelled to put out all our strength, we shall probably convince Holy Russia that we are not a Power to be lightly encountered, nor to leave our adversary without a mark on him by way of *souvenir*. It is of no use, however, to say that to Russia now, when our Ministers have been doing so much to inspire her with quite a contrary belief—and she will not be convinced even by facts with great promptitude. Any person who may have studied the history of our Egyptian campaigns must be only too well aware of the strain we have experienced in keeping the war going in that quarter, and he will have no difficulty in understanding how heinously unprovided we are for entering upon a quarrel with a Power like Russia. We have called out our Reserves and Militia, it is true; but to what does that amount? It simply sets free a few regiments now serving at home for service in the theatres of war. Supposing these regiments to be of full strength, and their men to be of good quality (points on which it is to be feared no confidence can be felt), they will still be but a handful as compared with the troops which Russia can bring into the field. Our chance was in setting

upon the enemy before brought his forces up in to the Afghan boundary; but *chance* has been lost. We must not look for any great we must be satisfied if we a disaster, until the energy we can put forth when in and the undoubtedly of our nation, may have of the furnishing forth of our and to the manifestation of ourselves as a fighting nation, which inevitably are brought about after a year or two of war. Russia will probably be exhausted by the time England is fairly devoted to the struggle.

As regards our navy, though that is not what it should be, as is manifest from the discussions regarding it which are now pending in Parliament, yet our adversary is in that respect no better off than ourselves. We may hope that (as happened during the wars of the French Revolution) the navy may be able to keep up our reputation as a martial people until such times as our army, having been at last brought to a strength and efficiency befitting our place in Europe, may take up the running and give the final stroke to our insolent foe.

There is no doubt that, *prestige*, being of so much consequence as it is both to England and Russia in the East, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to compose this quarrel without fighting. Fighting may be postponed for the present by England consenting to dishonourable terms. These dishonourable terms there is no doubt that our Ministers will be ready to accede to for a truce (it will only be a truce), but it must at least be for the nation to decide whether it will endure the humiliation of making concessions to an insolent foe, and of breaking faith with and deserting another ally. When the

Government are known to be mean and paltry in their views, and to have ends of their own to serve which are directly opposed to the interests and honour of the nation, it behoves our people to exercise a pressure as strong and as persistent as it can be made upon a Cabinet lying under such injurious suspicions. There may be reasons why a change of Government should not at this moment take place; but these must be reasons also why the Government should be kept under the watchful control of the nation. And, most undoubtedly, the crisis in which we now find ourselves, end how it may, ought not for a moment to be lost sight of by the public until they have provided against a repetition of such complications by ejecting from office the mean-spirited faction who have so involved us.

We remember to have heard of an incident which occurred on the race-ground at Kingston, Jamaica, and which frequently recurs to our attention because it illustrates exactly the attitude taken by Mr Gladstone in all his many foreign disagreements. Two jet-black sportsmen had come to the course arm-in-arm as good friends, but some contrariness having suddenly taken one of them, they were engaged in a contention which entertained a very large company between the heats. The exasper-

ated negro, at the time when our informant first became cognisant of the quarrel, was pouring out his soul in no measured or choice terms against his late comrade, who evidently desired peace at any price, and who met the objurgations by exclaiming, "You mean it, sar? You mean it?" Upon this, the assailant not only repeated everything that had been advanced derogatory to his friend's honour, but proceeded to involve his friend's father, mother, sister, brother, "and ebrybody dat belongs to for you' dam famly," in one sweeping malediction. Still the other demanded, "You mean it, sar? You mean it?" A threat to "mash all him blassed bones" produced only the same exclamation. And at last, just as they were clearing the course for next race, the poor ensuer of peace, having been knocked down and trampled on, was seen rising from the ground with bleeding mouth and nose, and heard faltering as the bell rang, "You mean it sar? You mean it?"

P. S.—Since going to press, we have learned that the country is to be called upon for a credit of eleven millions. We hope and trust that the House of Commons will insist upon being fully informed as to the ends for which this money is to be employed before consenting to so large a demand.

¹ *For you* means *your* in Jamaica jargon. So *for me* is *mine*, *for him*, *his*, &c.

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THE TORPEDO SCARE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.]

SIR.—If I presume to endeavour to stem the tide of public opinion as regards the very great efficacy of the fish-torpedo as a weapon of maritime warfare, it is not with any confidence in my powers of persuasion, or for the pleasure of controversy, but because I am perhaps the only person living who has commanded squadrons or single ships in war, where torpedoes were used as *offensive* weapons—I am, yours truly,

HOBART PACHA.]

DURING the late Turco-Russian war, Russian torpedo-boats constantly attacked Turkish ships. These attacks were made not only by boats armed with the Pole and Harvey torpedo, but with the newest type of the Whitehead torpedo then invented. They were commanded by as active and gallant a set of men as ever stepped a ship's deck, and who made every possible effort to destroy Turkish ironclads, every one of which returned safely to Constantinople after the war. The only loss to the Turkish squadron was two small wooden gun-boats blown up in the *Danube* through the carelessness of their commanders.

I venture to maintain that the power of the torpedo, as a weapon

of offence as well as of defence, is enormously exaggerated. Were it not so, one might almost say that naval warfare would soon come to an end altogether, inasmuch as no fleet or ship could resist such a deadly weapon. Blockade of an enemy's port could not be maintained. Vessels could never lie at anchor so near an enemy's coast. Fleets could not cruise in the neighbourhood of hostile ships carrying torpedo-boats. Ports defended by torpedoes could not be attacked, harbours and estuaries could not be approached; and, in fact, none of the old systems of naval warfare could be put into execution. The courage of naval officers, their coolness in time of action, their seamanlike qualities,

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of which some nations are so justly proud, would be put to a test in a manner altogether different from what has hitherto taken place. The sailor, although brave and cool in a fair fight, would be in constant dread of being hurled into the air, without even the chance of striking a blow or firing a shot in self-defence. The writer of this, while commanding squadrons manned by men who have not only the unsurpassed courage of their race, but who have recourse when in danger to the almighty word *kismet*, and only think of danger *after* its arrival—had only his own humble idea of courage without *kismet*, and thus felt all the anxiety day and night, for nearly a year, of not knowing at what moment he might receive the happy despatch by being blown into the air.

The Russians had, very shortly after I had anchored my squadron in Batoum, launched several torpedoes at the ships, in spite of my having placed guard-boats across the entrance of the harbour. One of these torpedoes struck the chain of the flag-ship, and went on shore unexploded; another struck on the armoured belt of a corvette and exploded, but the blow being at an angle, it did no material injury. After this experience, it was absolutely incumbent on me to take some steps for the safety of the vessels under my command. The means in my power for torpedo defence were unfortunately very limited, but that very fact enabled me to prove that necessity is the mother of invention. For example, the system which I had seen adopted with regard to hostile fleets in torpedo defence, comprised a system of *éclairage* which it was entirely out of my power to employ. Thus, instead of lighting my ship, whereby I should have become a target for the ene-

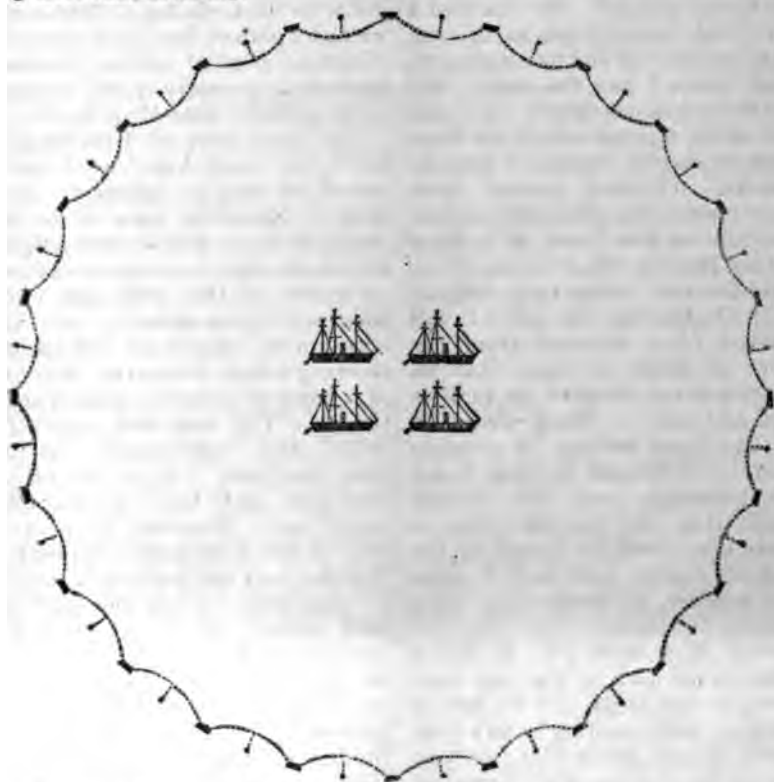
my, I from force of circumstances, was obliged to maintain what was in reality the far better system of utter darkness from sunset to daylight. But of this hereafter.

I will now relate in detail the plan I applied as a defence in regard to the different points mentioned above—namely, the course to be adopted for the safety of ships of war while blockading an enemy's port, while lying at anchor near an enemy's coast, or while cruising in the neighbourhood of hostile ships blockading. I think that the ships should be always, when convenient, under way, and with their torpedo-nets out, constantly changing their positions so as not to be easily found by the enemy's torpedo-boats: no lights whatever should be shown. Should it be necessary to anchor, I think that the ships should be anchored in small detachments, and a system of defence arranged as follows, placed round each ship or detachment. (See Plan No. 1.)

By this it will be seen that boats at a distance of 400 or 500 yards will be placed round the squadron at anchor. These boats will be connected together by wire-ropes immersed about two feet in the water, and buoyed in the centre. The object of this is to catch the screw of any attacking torpedo-boat. It has been proved that common rope, used for want of anything better, has effectually checked the career and capsized an attacking torpedo-boat in her attempt to destroy a Turkish ship in the Black Sea during the last war; and I know that most satisfactory experiments with the wire-rope have been made elsewhere. The result of these experiments was that a torpedo-boat, steaming 19 miles an hour, has capsized while dashing full speed on to an imaginary enemy's ship.

PLAN NO. 1.

The wire-rope between the boats is sunk sufficiently to catch the screw of the torpedo-boat, and buoyed half-way between the boats to prevent its sinking more than necessary.



N.B.—The 4 vessels are 120 yards long. The two pairs, breadthways, are 50 yards apart. There are 24 boats, each 8 to 9 yards long; and the 24 spaces between the boats are 54 yards each. The radius of the circle described by the boats is 550 yards, which keeps them 400 yards from the ships.

It seems to me that this system, carefully applied, would prove a most efficient and thorough defence against torpedo attack. I am aware that the present torpedoes are fitted with screws so sharply edged that they would cut through any rope placed to stop them. With the wire-rope this would be impossible. This system of defence would apply to single ships at anchor in the same way as it would apply to a squadron or to a detachment, and I see no reason why a larger number of ships than I have shown on the plan should not be protected in a similar way—the only question being, that the radius would have to be increased according to the number of ships, which might prove, if overdone, inconvenient, if not impossible. Objections might be made that in bad weather boats could not keep their

positions. I have had ample proof that in bad weather torpedo-boats cannot fire with any accuracy. It therefore tells both ways.

Now as to lying at anchor near an enemy's coast. In this also I have had considerable experience while at Batoum and its neighbourhood, where I had frequently under my command twelve or fourteen ships, against which the Russians constantly organized torpedo attacks. All their attacks were unsuccessful, for the following reasons: in the first place, as a most gallant Russian officer informed me after the war, it was very difficult to find Batoum at all. I will diverge for a moment from my point in order to state that an English naval officer of the highest rank and position informed me that he had tried defence in torpedo warfare, he himself being on board the defending ship, that he had found that the torpedo-boats so easily discovered his vessel in the darkest nights, that, had it been real warfare, she would have been sunk or destroyed.

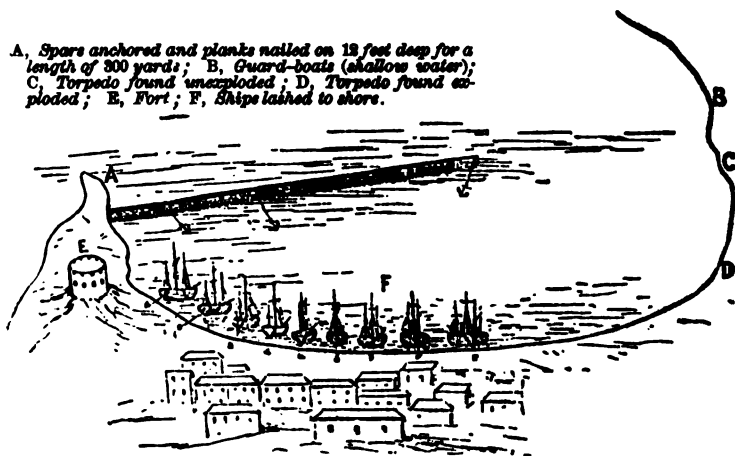
Now if a man tries to find a thing in the dark in his own bedroom, he can easily find it; but if he goes into another man's bedroom, it will puzzle him vastly to put his hands upon what he wants. I make this comparison because I imagine that the attacking torpedo-boats referred to by this gallant officer came from the immediate neighbourhood, and knew pretty well where the object of their attack was lying—knew the bearings and distance before they started to attack her, and thus had very little difficulty in finding their way. The attacks by the Russian ships on the Turkish squadrons were generally made from vessels coming from ports 200 to 300 miles off, and which, on a pitch-dark night had to find a harbour where there

were no marks or lights of any description. Nothing could be seen beyond the dark outline of the high mountains behind the harbour, which were next to useless as a guide to the anchorage. Moreover, we had a plan of defence at Batoum of a most original nature, proving again that necessity is the mother of invention. (See Plan No. 2.)

The little port of Batoum and its towns were kept, as I have stated, in perfect darkness. The severest penalties were to be incurred by those who showed a light anywhere, and on several occasions infraction of that rule was punished with great severity. On one occasion we caught an old rascal showing a light from the window of a house prominently placed near the sea. The man was instantly seized and bastinadoed. After this, and when one or two other examples had been made, one might have imagined Batoum a city of the dead during the night. The shape of the harbour is shown by the plan. From the spit of land marked A we improvised a breakwater, consisting of such trees and spars as we could lay our hands on. These trees and spars were anchored in a line verging towards the beach at a point called B. To these trees were nailed numbers of thin planks abreast straight down into the water—so making, as it were, a wall of planks about 12 feet deep. The proof of their efficacy was shown one morning by our finding a hole in the planks, and a torpedo diverged from its course lying on the beach at the point marked C. This torpedo had not exploded, and, when discovered by the guard-boats, was surrounded by gaping inhabitants who, in their astonishment, looked upon this unusual apparition as if it were a huge fish still alive and moving his tail—that tail being,

PLAN NO. 2.—HARBOUR OF BATOUM.

A, Spars anchored and planks nailed on 12 feet deep for a length of 300 yards; B, Guard-boats (shallow water); C, Torpedo found unexploded; D, Torpedo found exploded; E, Fort; F, Ships lashed to shore.



in fact, the screw, which was still in motion. This proved that, as we had anticipated, the direction of the torpedo had been changed on coming into contact with the planks; and instead of going among the ships at anchor, as was intended, it had gone ashore. I think this experience exceedingly interesting, as it shows that very little will turn the direction of a fish-torpedo.

On several other occasions attacks were made by torpedo-boats on the ships in the port of Batoum, without any result, beyond a loss to the Russians of three or four torpedoes, which were landed on different parts of the beach, near to which the Turkish men-of-war were lying at anchor. Some of these torpedoes were in such a state of perfection, that Mr Whitehead the inventor, knowing that we had by their capture become the possessor of his secret, made a special contract with the Turkish Government, whereby he was bound to give twenty-five torpedoes at cost price, and wherein it was agreed that the Ottoman Admiralty were to pay

nothing for the secret (for which other Governments were paying from £12,000 to £15,000) so long as they kept it.

I shall now mention a curious incident which happened to a Turkish squadron lying at anchor and protected by guard-boats, placed somewhat in the manner I have already described. I wish my readers always to remember that the appliances against torpedoes in the Turkish fleet were of the simplest possible description. The squadron consisted of five vessels, which had been in the habit of cruising every night to avoid torpedo attack. On this occasion they had, in consequence of the bad weather, returned to their anchorage. A Russian vessel, carrying five torpedo-boats in tow, started from Odessa to hunt for the Turkish squadron, who were supposed to be cruising off Serpent Island, about 80 miles from Odessa. The Muscovites were unable to find their enemy, and I don't wonder at it, for even had they been cruising off that night, the Ottoman ships used

smokeless coal, sailing in open order for safety against collisions, and without showing any lights. The Russian vessel with the torpedo-boats being disappointed in finding what she wanted at sea, proceeded to the usual place of anchorage of the Turkish squadron off Soulina mouth. Finding the weather bad, the commander thought that it was best not to attack; but it appears that one of the torpedo-boats, in disobedience of orders, made a dash at the Turkish squadron. This particular boat was armed with the Pole torpedo. The officer in command made a gallant charge at the first Turkish vessel he could discern through the darkness. As he approached her, he found that *something* all of a sudden stopped his way; he saw several black objects approaching him. Nothing daunted, he struggled to get alongside the vessel under her bows. Finding that he could not succeed in getting quite close, he, in despair, discharged his torpedo, but without doing any harm whatever to the Turkish ship at which he directed it. Scarcely had he done so when (as he described his own sensations afterwards) he found himself in the water without knowing by what process he had got there, or how in the world it had all happened—the real facts being that the black objects he saw were the guard-boats, which were being drawn closer and closer to him by the ropes that connected them together, which ropes fouling his screw had been the cause of the disaster. His boat was capsized and went to the bottom, whither he would have gone too if he had not been fished out by the crew of one of the Turkish guard-boats and taken prisoner. The greater part of his crew were drowned. The name of this dar-

ing young officer was Putskin; and his cool courage was very amusing, for when brought before the commanding officer of the Turkish squadron in a half-drowned condition, he could only exclaim, in excellent English, "Why the devil didn't I blow up that ship!"

He was asked if he had any idea what had stopped him, and it was suggested to him that a rope between the guard-boats might have fouled his screw.

"Something of that sort must have happened," he answered. "But why the devil didn't I blow up that ship!"

The poor fellow seemed to have no thought regarding the sad plight he was in: he only grieved for not having succeeded in carrying out his object.

He explained to me that the other torpedo-boats which started with him were all armed with the Whitehead torpedo, but that *it was impossible to use it in bad weather*. The Pole torpedo might have done the deed he was so anxious to perform, and with it he might have succeeded in "blowing up that ship." He was too plucky a fellow to be allowed to go back to the enemy, so we kept him a prisoner till the conclusion of the war: and I only hoped that, for its own sake, the Russian Admiralty did not lose sight of such a dashing and determined officer.

While writing on incidents of the war, I will mention another interesting occurrence. A Turkish ironclad was lying off Soukoum Kali. That place being an open roadstead, she was very much exposed, and an excellent object for torpedo attack. A fast Russian cruiser was always hovering about, but the cordon of guard-boats connected by ropes prevented her torpedo-boat from making any attempt. This torpedo-boat was armed with

a Harvey torpedo. One night there was to have been an eclipse of the moon. Now there is a superstition among orientals regarding an eclipse, which caused the look-out to be somewhat relaxed, and the guard-boats to be withdrawn, and nearer the man-of-war than they should have been—in fact, I fear they had gone quite alongside, thinking more of the mysterious eclipse than of their active enemy.

As the eclipse only lasted for about a couple of hours, the steamer carrying the torpedo-boat must have been near in the offing, and should have been seen; although I found, on inquiry, that the system of no lights and no smoke was carried out in the strictest sense by the Russian torpedo-carrying vessel. However, this may be, half an hour after the moon was eclipsed the attack was made by a boat carrying a Harvey torpedo. This boat succeeded in getting so near that she was able to make the circuit necessary for firing her torpedo, and, though attacked by the guard-boats, fired it within ten feet of the Turkish ship. A great explosion and much smoke was the result. The lookers-on on shore telegraphed to Sebastopol that they saw the vessel sink. However, so far from that being the case, I found, on visiting her two or three days afterwards, that, except for a slight mark on her side close to the water's edge, no damage was done. On the vessel's return to Constantinople she was put into dock, when it was found that she had been very slightly damaged; in fact it was not necessary to change any of her outside plates. I think that the manœuvres necessary to make the Harvey torpedo efficacious render it a weapon on which little or no reliance can be placed, unless all

the hands on board the attacked ship are asleep. I would rather trust to the Pole than to the Harvey torpedo, though I do not think that either of them counts for much when a sharp look-out is kept. In my opinion the most useful torpedo is a fixed one, fired either by contact or by electric batteries at a distance, especially when they are used in defence of the approaches to forts, the entrances of harbours, of estuaries, &c. According to general opinion, the perfected Whitehead or Swartzkoff torpedo is the only weapon for active service at sea. Let us examine how they can best be utilised. My opinion is that for attack they are of very doubtful efficacy. I remember on one occasion I followed in a very fast frigate (my flag-ship) the Emperor of Russia's yacht *Livadia* too near to the fire of the forts of Sebastopol. I say too near, because I drew on my ship such a fire, that, had I not "cleared pretty quickly out of that," I should not have been here to-day to tell the story. Since the war, a Russian naval officer, whose name was Captain Makaroff, A.D.C. to H.M. the Emperor of Russia, told me that he had under his command seven torpedo-boats, with which he volunteered to go out—in the daytime it must be remembered—and attack me. We discussed at some length the probable result, and I think that even he admitted that he could have done nothing. Here is my view and argument. I said to him, "When I saw you and your torpedo-boats coming out, I should have run away. Now I could go thirteen or fourteen knots. You could steam about nineteen. Thus your speed following me would have been about five knots—no great speed at which to approach a vessel

armed to the teeth with Nordenfeldt guns—guns *en barbette* firing grape, shrapnel, &c. I am convinced that we should have destroyed all the torpedo-boats; and this, I believe, would be the fate of any day-attack attempted by them."

"Well, then," said my friend, "I should have followed and attacked you during the night."

"There again," I said, "I think that you would have failed, because if you had been in range of my small guns as well as of shell, say at about 3000 yards, before dark I should have destroyed you. After dark I should have changed my course, and how would you have found me? However, supposing that I had stopped in the night and put down my defences, what could you have done! I don't think that a ship can be seen so as to be fired at a distance of more than 400 yards on a dark night, and a moving ship would be a still more difficult mark. If a torpedo-boat came nearer than 400 yards, she would have been caught by the line of defence, should I have thought it prudent to stop." On this point we had a long and somewhat warm discussion, which ended—at least I flattered myself it did—in the Russian officers remarking that really he thought, after all, that he could have done nothing.

I find that naval men have, as a rule, great confidence in a system of defence against torpedoes by means of nets, and I understand that the ingenuity of the age has invented a plan enabling a ship to steam seven or eight knots without any inconvenience from this modern crinoline. For my part, I do not ignore the utility of this system for want of a better; but I hear rumours of torpedoes which will be able to attack ships at a point that cannot be protected by this plan—

namely, under the bottom of the ship, where the protecting net would have no power. But the torpedo, of whatever description, is generally carried in a boat, and if you can manage to catch or destroy the boat, there is an end of the matter.

Now with regard to the power of torpedoes for attacking purposes. I hear it said that during a naval engagement torpedoes can be utilised to a very great extent. In this I am inclined to agree. If torpedoes can accompany squadrons and act independently either against disabled ships or even against ships which might be approached unperceived, there can be no doubt that they would play an important part in a naval engagement. But the difficulty seems to be their remaining constantly at sea in company with a fleet. The French already are drilling their torpedo-boats to accompany a sea-going squadron; but I have a suspicion that, for different reasons, these boats are constantly obliged to return to port. It must be remembered that a torpedo-boat is built of the lightest material, and is of the finest workmanship. Very little would therefore tend to put her out of order. I have seen a torpedo-boat before a gale, in a gale, and after a gale, at sea; and although I should be sorry to discourage those who have put faith in her capacity as a sea-boat, still I must say that in the last state the boat represented a very dilapidated appearance.

Although it is the fashion for ironclads to be fitted so as they can launch their own torpedoes, I do not think that they would be able to do so with efficiency, for several reasons—the first being, that a torpedo is never sure of being fired with accuracy when projected from a height greater than two or three

feet above the water. In fact it has been proved that to obtain the so-called accuracy at which they profess to have arrived, the torpedo must be fixed as close as possible to the water's edge, and in the boats now in construction the most important element is the close proximity to the water in which the tubes are placed. I myself have seen torpedoes fired from a ship's broadside, and although on one or two occasions they have been launched with considerable accuracy, I have seen one of them immediately after its submersion fly straight up in the air and endanger the safety of the ship from which it had been fired ; so I think that little confidence can be placed, at present, in the efficacy of torpedoes fired from ship's batteries.

There is another essential point as regards the efficacy of sea-going torpedoes during a naval engagement. A torpedo-boat might in the *melee* mistake a friend for an enemy. Again, let us suppose that two ships are hotly engaged, and that one of them succeeds in capturing the other. If the conquering ship neglects to hoist on her prize the flag of her nation, a torpedo-boat coming from a distance, and belonging to the captor's nationality, is as likely as not to blow the prize up. This may be rather far-fetched, but more unlikely things have really happened in naval warfare. Coming naval engagements will be soon decided,—the time would be too short and the confusion too great to allow of any accurate action on the part of torpedo-boats. Independent action would be dangerous. I should suggest that torpedo-boats of a smaller class that can be hoisted up should be carried on board men-of-war. These could be used or not as required, by re-

sponsible captains, who would be capable of forming an opinion as to the time when they should be utilised.

Now one word about offensive torpedo warfare. Torpedo-boats could be sent from blockading squadrons into an enemy's port, and if the enemy's ships were unprepared, could do, no doubt, a vast amount of injury. Further than this, I am at a loss to perceive how they can be utilised.

I have ventured in this paper to throw some doubt upon the great efficacy of the so-called fish-torpedo, inasmuch as I think its danger can be averted. I will now turn to other torpedo inventions, which I think, when perfected, will prove better adapted to naval warfare. It must be remembered that the origin of the torpedo was in America during the great war between the North and South. The torpedo used, although at that time in its infancy, proved itself to be a most deadly weapon of defence. Placed at the mouths of great rivers, in the rivers themselves, and in shoal-water, wherever an enemy was likely to be cruising, it did good service on many occasions. I think I am right when I say that more than fifteen vessels were destroyed by torpedoes during the time that the war lasted. This torpedo was, with some very rare exceptions, used as a mine placed either floating, or at the bottom of the sea or river, and several vessels were thus destroyed while passing over these snares. More than one case of conspicuous daring on the part of the Southern naval officers occurred during the war, while using most effectively what is called the oigar torpedo-boat. This was a craft which, when in motion, was entirely immersed, except the top of the funnel, and might almost be called

a submarine torpedo. I remember on one occasion during the war, when I was at Charleston, meeting in a coffee-room at that place a young naval officer (a Southerner), with whom I got into conversation. He told me that that night he was going to sink a Northern man-of-war which was blockading the port and invited me to see him off. I accompanied him down to his cigar-boat, as he called it, and found that she was a vessel about forty feet long, shaped like a cigar, on the bow of which was placed a torpedo. On his stepping on board with his crew of four men, his boat was immersed till nothing but a small piece of funnel was visible. He moved off into the darkness at no great speed—say at about five miles an hour. The next evening, on visiting the coffee-house, I found my friend sitting quietly smoking his pipe. He told me that he had succeeded in making a hole in the frigate which he had attacked, which vessel could, in fact, be seen lying in shallow water, some seven miles off, careened over to repair damages. But he said that, on the concussion made by firing the torpedo, the water had rushed in through the hatches of his boat, and she had sunk to the bottom. All his men were drowned. He said that he didn't know how he escaped himself, but he fancied that he came up through the hatches, as he found himself floating about, and swam on shore. This affair was officially reported by the American blockading squadron, corroborating the fact of the injury done to the frigate, and stating that the torpedo-boat was got up, with four dead bodies in her hold. Here is one system which might be utilised in naval warfare if perfected, and I am given to understand that a submarine torpedo-

boat is already invented by Mr Nordenfeldt.

In regard to the fixed torpedoes I have already referred to, the admiral commanding the American squadron told me that on one occasion he was steaming in line, his flag-ship being second in the order of sailing, when suddenly the ship ahead of them disappeared altogether, having struck on a mine; and that he found these mines the most deadly enemies to deal with, especially when the water was not very deep. I have seen a clever invention of Colonel Ley tried at Constantinople. This invention which is now being put into shape by Mr Nordenfeldt, struck me as being the weapon of the future, if the present somewhat serious defect—namely, its want of speed and immersion—could be overcome. When I saw it tried, it was steered by electricity, and went very straight for more than a mile. But it was too visible in the water, and only obtained about nine knots' speed, and thus, I think, would have been easily destroyed in the daytime. However, I am given to understand that Mr Nordenfeldt has partially, if not entirely, overcome the above-named defects. If so, he has a good chance of taking a lead in torpedo-manufacture, as he does now in machine-guns. General Berdan also promises great things in torpedoes. If he can do what he professes, he will cut every one out; for he undertakes to give speed, distance, safety against nets and other obstacles, easy steering powers, certainty of direction, &c. I wish him well, but he has been a very long time about it, and so far his trials have shown few satisfactory results.

Now in this paper I have spoken of the fish or Whitehead torpedo, the Harvey, the Pole, the fixed or mine torpedo, the Ley or Nor-

denfeldt, the cigar-boat and the Berdan. I have no doubt that there are other inventions, because the fact remains that the torpedo is not perfect—no, not by any means. When it is so, we had better act like the 'coon up a tree in America, who says to the sportsman, whom he knows to be a dead shot, "Don't shoot—I'll come down;" for war would then be too awful.

As the torpedo scare may extend to merchant-vessels, I will say a few words of consolation on that head. A merchant-vessel need not fear the torpedo-cruiser, because if the vessel carrying the boats which launch that nasty weapon can get near enough for them to use it, she will be near enough to go alongside, for the capture of valuable property is of more importance than its destruction. Moreover, it would be useless to send out torpedo-boats alone to look for prizes. Where could they be sent from? Where would they get coals? And what would they do with the prizes after they had taken them? They cannot carry prize-crews; and to destroy a vessel for the sake of destruction would be a wanton act, which would be universally condemned. Besides, a torpedo is a very expensive article to throw away for the sake of destroying an enemy's merchant-vessel. So I think that the captains and crews of merchant-vessels may breathe freely as far as torpedoes are concerned. It is intended, I understand, to use torpedoes on board regular sea-going vessels of from 300 to 400 tons. This seems to me to be a practicable idea; and should the distance a torpedo can be fired be

increased, these vessels would be serviceable craft: but so long as 400 yards is the maximum distance, they would, unless attacking a craft of their own size, be liable to be knocked to pieces before they could get within torpedo-range of the enemy; and it must be remembered that they would be a much larger target than the torpedo-boats.

One word more. I would ask my naval friends how they would judge distance at night when firing their torpedoes, and how they propose to approach ships guarded with nets and boats? Remember, also, that ships can cruise with their nets down. The fact is, that what frightens people is the great speed at which they see the devilish-looking torpedo-boat dashing by them. They do not take into consideration the damage that great speed would cause to the torpedo-boat itself, in the event of its meeting any obstacle, or being obliged to stop suddenly. For example, a curious case occurred lately on this coast. A torpedo-boat was obliged to stop suddenly, the result being that her machinery came to utter grief, and three men were killed by the fires being thrown out of the furnaces and on to them; and I repeat that a boat fouling a wire-rope was capsized and sunk, through the sudden check of the great impetus through the water. Taking into consideration all the experiences that I have narrated in this paper, I think that I am justified in saying that fish-torpedo warfare is to a great extent a bugbear, and though not to be entirely despised, may be designed as the "naval scare of the day."

FORTUNE'S WHEEL.—PART III.

CHAPTER VIII.—A MEETING AT THE CROSS-TRACKS.

WHEN Jack Venables spoke of standing in hesitation at cross-ways on the road of life, he did not carry the metaphor quite so far as he might have done. Were we favoured by the sight of a sketch-map of our track through the world, we should see that there were side-paths perpetually branching off, which to all appearance we might just as probably have followed to our misfortune or our signal advantage. While in any general biographical chart, illustrating the career of sundry individuals, we should see the paths of others striking into our own by the most unexpected turns at the least likely places; so that two men thrown together by accident or Providence shall thereafter walk on together side by side, or possibly even arm in arm.

As he fancied, it was nothing more than a caprice which decided Mr Venables to go south by sea, instead of establishing communications with the Southern Express at Perth. As he remarked to his uncle, whom he still politically took into his confidence, "I may as well think matters quietly over, before having a serious talk with my father: it will be better that I have something cut and dry to suggest."

Moray, of course, made no objection: the route by which his young friend might travel was a matter of perfect indifference to him. As for Jack, he knew himself too well to imagine that he could ever think when he wished to think. With his mercurial disposition and nervous temperament, he put far more faith in quick inspirations,

influenced by consideration of circumstances on the spur of the moment, or possibly by the chapter of accidents. But he had resolved to embark on one of the Highland coasting steamers at Port Sligachan, simply because he liked the idea of a sea-voyage.

The very day he settled that impromptu plan, a gentleman of sympathetic nature, though, as the Americans say, an entire stranger to him, came to a similar decision in the Isle of Skye. The Honourable Wilfred Winstanley had all his life been addicted to impulses, though he nevertheless had made his way in the world very successfully. One night he had gone to bed in the state chamber of Castle Somerled in a less serene frame of mind than was usual with him. For the most part he was good-nature itself, as a man ought to be on whom fortune had smiled very steadily. His host's Lafitte had tasted sour; there had been no savour in the *entrées*; he had been vexed to find himself "doggish and snappish," as a worthy Quaker used to remark in his diary. Altogether, when he took his bedroom candle to go up-stairs he felt strangely out of sorts, and he went to bed to toss and tumble under the blankets. Towards the small hours his sensations gave shape to his suspicions, and he turned out of bed into the dawn to confirm these.

"Gout, by Jove! I thought as much," was his rueful verdict, as he gazed on a swelling toe that blushed under his anxious examination. "Gout, by Jove! and I'll be bound Willis has brought no colchicum."

It's true that I have not had an attack for a couple of years. Just like my luck," he added, with the fractious injustice of a spoiled child, "it's choosing to lay hold of me in this heaven-forsaken Patmos, where the doctors are sure to smell of spirits and peat-smoke, and their drugs can't be worth the bottles they put them in. Well, if I am to be ill, I'll be ill in Berkley Square,—always supposing I don't break down in making a bolt for it."

And when Willis appeared with his master's hot water, he received orders to make inquiries as to steamers, but to pack immediately in any case.

"Should no steamer be expected to-day, you will go and bargain for a tug, or something of that kind."

And Willis, who had been broken to passive obedience, and who had long before ceased to be surprised at anything, if he shrugged his shoulders metaphorically, simply answered with a "Yes, sir."

As it happened, a cargo-steamer, carrying passengers when it could pick them up, had come the day before into the adjacent harbour, and having received prompt despatch from the company's agents, was prepared to weigh anchor in the forenoon. Lord Somerled, Mr Winstanley's noble hose, protested vehemently against his friend's departure. Mr Winstanley was profuse of apologies, but inflexible. It was altogether for Lord Somerled's sake that he left. He had made a rule of never being laid up in a friend's house when he could help it, and it was a rule he had never hitherto departed from.

"Nothing would tempt me to victimise you, my dear fellow. It would be flying in the face of all my principles. I hope I'm unselfish before everything, and I know my duty to my neighbour better than that."

So his lordship did what the valet did not venture on. He presumed on a long acquaintance so far as to shrug his shoulders openly, and ordered the carriage to drive Mr Winstanley to the harbour.

To do Mr Winstanley bare justice, however precipitate his impulses, he acted upon them with rare determination. Even to himself he would have been loath to acknowledge that, "not to put too fine a point on it," he had made a fool of himself. Yet we will not undertake to say that he had not some searchings of heart, when he hobbled on his sounder foot across the greasy decks of the Cuchullin. We could almost aver that when he was assisted down the battered brass-bound steps of the dark companion, and had stumbled into the gloom of his strong-smelling little cabin, he wafted a sigh of soft regret towards the comfortable quarters he had precipitately quitted. If he suffered, however, like the impenitent cardinal, he "made no sign"; and suffer he certainly did, in body if not in spirit. The shaking of a carriage is far from being a sovereign specific for a sharp attack of gout that has quickly developed itself. If we were to give a non-professional diagnosis of his symptoms, we should say that he felt as if the roomy slipper he was wearing had suddenly become several sizes too small for him; as if a cook had been scientifically scoring the ailing foot in the fashion in which you prepare a spatch-cocked chicken, subsequently rubbing in the mustard and Worcester sauce, not by any means forgetting the cayenne; and as if a spark or two from the glowing kitchen-fire had flown and lodged themselves under the toenail. In such circumstances the Stoic may make no sign, but his

temper will not be of the sweetest.

When his blinking eyes had accustomed themselves to the dimness, Winstanley cast a disconsolate glance around him. The low-roofed cabin showed wear and tear, and the panels stood sorely in need of repainting. The table and the seats in the centre were fixtures, and it needed dexterous navigation to tread the narrow passage between them and the surrounding lockers and horse-hair sofas; while a man over the middle height, unless he stooped his head, must infallibly bump it against the blackened beams above. But Mr Winstanley, though he loved his luxuries, was an old traveller: he had been in queer places and seen strange things; nor did he expect in a Hebridean cattle-boat to find the comforts of a Cunard Liner. Had it not been for that abominable gout, he would have enjoyed the novel experience rather than otherwise. And, the gout notwithstanding, he merely made a grimace when the shock-headed and courteous individual who officiated as teward, in answer to his inquiry as to an available berth, pointed to one of the tattered sofas.

"Ye see, sir, we're no just that weel provided with state-cabins," said the man apologetically, as if some half-dozen were already engaged, and they would have arranged to have one or two more had they expected this honour's arrival.

"If only I have no companions in my misery," murmured Winstanley, resignedly; and supporting himself on his valet's shoulder, he painfully regained the deck. But even that very natural wish was not to be gratified.

"I guess, stranger, I must have done you a mischief, and seems, judging from your limp when you

came aboard, that you had been sorter crippled already."

The apology, such as it was, came from a lank, wiry figure, in a tall stove-pipe hat, and a suit of go-to-meeting garments; and Winstanley, although he had been repeatedly in America, detested Americans of a certain class. And assuredly an apology of some sort was due, since this particular citizen of the States had brought down his foot upon Mr Winstanley's afflicted member, making that dignified gentleman *pirouette* on one leg, with his hand on his servant's shoulder as the pivot of the movement. Hobbling off in rage and pain, he did not care to prolong the conversation; but the ejaculation he uttered, when beyond ear-shot of his assailant, made a Scotch minister, similarly attired in black, turn up his eyes in silent protestation. It was seldom that Mr Winstanley so far forgot himself. He hated the clergyman for that silent reproof, but he was still more annoyed with himself for having given cause for it.

Ere he had forgiven himself or regained his composure, the vessel was under way. She was a narrow, deep-waisted screw, indifferently manned, and apparently much overloaded. At least it struck our friend, who had been at sea in all manner of craft, that she was down by the head and thoroughly out of trim. She carried a load of sheep and black cattle forward, besides a score or two of Celts, who might be bound for the herring-fishing; and the deck abaft the funnel was hampered with a miscellaneous pile of mixed goods, so that her few hands had little room to move about. "I hope we may have fair weather," was his passing prayer; but his mind was chiefly preoccupied with his malady, as was only natural. The stamp of the American's

heavy boot was still throbbing and thrilling through all his fevered pulses ; and as the green shores of the land-locked bay seemed to slip past the stationary steamer, he paid no sort of attention to the scenery. But as a sense of soothing succeeded to acute torments, a change came over the spirit of his dreams. The American's violent remedy had brought temporary relief : instead of being worse, he felt decidedly better. And in that he saw a direct interposition of the Providence which had consistently befriended him through his many wanderings. He had prided himself on always making the best of mankind as he found them, and here was an opportunity of rising to the occasion—of coming out strong, like Mr Tapley under adverse circumstances. He would make the best of the circumstances, unpromising as they were, and show himself more than civil to the uncongenial companions of his solitude. An almost miraculous lull in his pains confirmed him in his manly resolutions. And when the tinkling of a cracked bell announced the serving of an early dinner, he almost felt equal to the occasion. In fact, having merely broken his fast upon tea and toast, and being a man of active habits, and by no means, generally speaking, a gouty subject, the cravings of nature began to assert themselves.

He was pleased to find the cabin comparatively well ventilated. The active Mr Willis had persuaded the steward to open one or two of the bull's-eyes and admit a current of air. Four gentlemen had already taken their places at a table seated for a dozen : there was his American acquaintance opposite to the minister : while the skipper, who occupied the place of honour at the top, was faced by a sheep-farmer from "misty Skye," bound

on a pleasure-jant to the western metropolis of Scotland.

There is no nobler sight for gods or men than "a great man struggling with the storm of fate." Cato-like, the Honourable Mr Winstanly had screwed himself up to a pitch of philosophy, where he was not to be lightly shaken. He scarcely flinched, so far as could be seen in the dusky twilight of the cabin, when the American welcomed him with the cordiality of an old acquaintance, whose friendly offices had given a claim on his good will.

"Wal, stranger," exclaimed that really good fellow, with a warmth that meant a hearty introduction to the company,—*"wal, stranger, here you are, all slicked up and smoothed down. Guess, when you limped aft with the broken balance of you, after I had most crushed off that gouty foot of yours, the bristles were up along the back like a catamount. That was human natur', and I apoligise. You remembered me of old Jeb Peabody and Judge Mason's bull. You want to hear about it, you say. Wal, Jeb was ferryman at Salem Flats, on the Chickabody river, and he kept a liquor-bar, and a store for general rations to the back of that. All fired deaf he was, ever since he had been hoisted by mistake, when the boys forgot him, over a blastin' charge in a quartz-mine down to Denver. He could take a power of drink could Jeb, but he was apt to get drowsy over it in a general way. Wal, one night he was sitting nodding behind his pipe in his shanty, when he hears somebody a-tapping at the door. 'Come in,' says Jeb, still sleepy-like. The party on the wrong side of the shingles raps again. 'Come in,' says Jeb again, 'or else, I guess, though it's well on in the fall, you'll find it kinder warm when you do come.'* The

stranger outside seemed deaf like Jeb; 'peared he was gettin' riled with being kept a-waitin', for soon Jeb could hear him stampin' and cussin'. 'Wal,' remarks Jeb, with a sigh, 'if I must get up to open, I must; but I guess, my friend, I'll make you see stars—some,' and he reaches out his hand to his slip of hickory,—when all of a sudden the shingles cave in, and Judge Mason's bull is in Jeb Peabody's weskit. Jeb was a candid man, and as he said arterwards in mentioning the fact—'the way I shouted and slipped out o' the winder like a greased streak o' lightnin', afore the crittur was done prancin' around, was a caution to iled snakes.' And that was you, stranger, as you hollered and made tracks; and as for me, like the judge's bull, I guess I was too fur taken aback to apologise."

No one seemed greatly to appreciate the American's apologue or apology, which, considering there was but an ounce or two of the pure metal to some tons of quartz, was not much to be wondered at. But Winstanley felt more in charity towards him than before, since he saw that the transatlantic gentleman was well disposed to monopolise the talk, and that for himself he might play the part of listener. During dinner and afterwards, the voluble American sought to beguile the time with a fund of anecdote, of aphorism, and sage and moral reflection. Nevertheless, he did not have it all his own way by any means. The minister and the sheep-farmer had many subjects more or less in common—mammon, home-missions, markets, the clip of wool, the *outrévidence* of the crofters, and the oppression of the land-owners. As for the skipper, he seldom opened his mouth, except to stow away the very solid victuals, or swallow whiskey-and-water. On

the whole, Winstanley, not foreseeing what was to befall on the morrow, deemed him the most agreeable member of the party.

The supper, which came off at nine, was more successful than the dinner. After devouring every thing indigestible, from cold corned-beef to crabs and Welsh rabbit, the society settled down to steady drinking. The American, to do him justice, having taken a "cock-tail or two" by way of digestive, stuck thenceforward to aerated water. But he talked nine to the dozen, as he chewed plugs of golden Virginia indefatigably, in deference to the scruples of his new English friend, who had strongly protested against smoking. Not that Mr Winstanley disliked a cigar, but he objected to suffocation by rancid nicotine.

The minister, the sheep-farmer, and the skipper met on common ground, or rather on common spirits-and-water, over a bowl of punch that was brewed by the reverend gentleman, after the soundest traditions of the fathers of the Church.

"The stuff you brew at the preachings," observed the hillman, with a solemn wink, "or when you're seeking to come over the heritors for an augmentation, or an 'eke' to the manse." And worthy Dr M'Tavish, knowing well what his friend meant, fully met his expectations. Winstanley, who sat sipping some weak brandy-and-water, soon sought a refuge on the deck. But a mist that was very much of a drizzle was settling down thickly, and Willis was almost immediately at his elbow, like a warning conscience. For Willis was attached to his master, and detested the duty of acting as sick-nurse to an aggravating patient.

"Excuse me, sir, but this mist

is the worst thing in the world for you. We should say it had set in for settled wet in the south. Believe me, you had much better go below."

"But I am half suffocated already, Willis, and those good gentlemen seem to have no notion of going to bed."

"Better be half smothered or half stunned, sir, than suffer pain for weeks to come," answered Willis, sententiously. "The one will be soon over; but who can tell the end of the other?"

So his master yielded to reason, and descended again to the Inferno, where his worst anticipations were fully realised. If the practice of patience be the discipline of life, Winstanley should have passed a profitable night.

When he crept on to the deck in the morning, he felt a doubly injured man. In his sense of intense feverishness it seemed as if he were suffering vicariously for the indulgences of his shipmates—and if he had swallowed the contents of the punch-bowls, while they had been simply looking on. But he revived in the freshness of the morning air, as he feasted his eyes on a magnificent Highland panorama. The Cuchullin was lying at anchor in the land-locked roadstead of Loch Rona. A thick undergrowth of dwarf oaks and alders, interlacing their boughs in great beds of bracken, came literally down to the beach of shingle; half-a-dozen streams were descending so many picturesque glens, breaking here and there over tiny waterfalls; while huge hills, with slopes of the softest green, and great shoulders draped in purple heather, were backed up by the splintered and weather-worn peaks that were partially veiled in the swirl of a drifting cloudland. In the foreground, near a little "change-

house," (*Anglicè*, public-house) and a cluster of hovels, was a snugshooting-box, with its garden washed by the sea-waves, where the luxuriance of the shrubs and the flower-beds glorified the warmth of the Gulf-stream.

"The boat will be going ashore, sir, after breakfast, should you think well of that," said the shock-headed steward very civilly; and Winstanley thanked him as civilly and declined, although, to a man in his situation, the proposal sounded seductively. He would have liked nothing better than a temporary escape from his floating purgatory; but he was reconciled to his fate in remaining on board, when the sprightly American came up with his greeting.

"I calculate, Colonel, by the way you're sniffing the mountain air, you feel as fresh this morning as a four-year old mustang. And if you're good for a run ashore, I'll come along and kinder take care o' you. No? You won't? Wal, then, if you like a hobble better, you're welcome to try one. Them rocks up there may be almighty grand, but I'd sooner spekilate on their tallness any day than climb them."

The morning passed slowly enough while the Cuchullin was leisurely landing cargo. The captain smoked and sipped his whisky-and-water, leaving the superintendence of operations to his mate. Winstanley, after sundry unsuccessful attempts to kill time, gave himself over to reflections that were exceedingly unpleasant. He was condemned to two other days and nights of confinement in his present society before being landed at a Christian port in the Clyde. He made up his mind to the inevitable, in the spirit of an early martyr.

And the inevitable promised to be worse than he imagined. As

the day went on, in the bay, sheltered on three sides, scarcely a breath of air was stirring. But nevertheless a growing groundswell came rolling round the bold headland to the westward. The sky had clouded over; there was oppression in the air; the leaden-coloured rollers seemed sullenly smoothed down by oil; and the mate made the remark that the glass was tumbling.

"There has been wild weather in the Atlantic—there can be no doubt of that; and the question is, whether we will not have a storm on the coast here."

As for the captain, casting all his cares upon Providence, he smoked and drank on imperturbably.

The passengers had come on board: the Cuchullin had got up her steam, and was slewing her head round to the sea-channel, when the mate sang out to slacken speed. A boat was seen putting out from the shore, and a signal-flag was being waved in front of the public-house.

"Now who may that be?" muttered Winstanley to himself. "It never rains but it pours, and here comes another ruffian to prove the possible aggravation of the least tolerable calamities."

For a man was seated in the stern-sheets as the boatmen strained to the oars.

Winstanley prided himself on his quick perceptions, and it struck him at once that the new-comer was a gentleman. Then stranger's luggage was presumptive evidence in that direction, since it consisted of a couple of neat portmanteaus, a gun-case, and a handbag in Russian leather. The handbag bore the golden initial letters "J. V."; and the gun-case, as the shrewd reader may have supposed, was superscribed at length as belonging to John Venables, Esq.

Jack was not gouty—far from it. On the contrary, he was in the highest health and spirits; and he swung himself up the side ladder with the grace of a young Antinous. His first words were a polite apology to the captain for delaying him, which the captain acknowledged by inarticulate mutterings and a stare from his whisky-sodden eyes.

As for Winstanley, he was from the first attracted to the stranger. Here, according to outward appearances, was a man with whom he might possibly have common ideas and sympathies. So the pair made friends over the dinner-table, and had it not been for the interruptions of the irrepressible Yankee, would practically have monopolised the conversation. For the minister was overawed by consciousness of ignorance of the subjects the others discussed in a kind of easy freemasonry; and the sheep-farmer, like naturally modest men, was always in extremes, and either painfully shy or brilliantly audacious.

It was just as well for Mr Winstanley that he had found a companion he fancied, for it seemed likely that the voyage might be indefinitely prolonged. The night had settled down in a fog, denser and damper than that of the previous one; and ten hours after they started the steamer was going half-speed over a heavy groundswell in impenetrable darkness. Slowing the engines had been the result of a compromise, when the skipper in a moment of drunken depression had lent an ear to the warnings of his inexperienced mate. But when the youth, in increasing uneasiness, urged lying off altogether till day should dawn, his superior had lost temper and decided to go boldly ahead.

"It's but kittle steering here,"

the mate had objected ; "and with all that corrugated iron in the hold we can hardly trust altogether to the compasses. If we were among the rocks and reefs off the Point of Achnabullichan now——"

"And what if we were, my man?" returned his commander, with drunken dignity. "Man and boy, I've been afloat for thirty years, and I ought to know every one of the reefs between Cape Wrath and the Moil of Cantyre."

They were bending over a chart spread on the cabin-table, and the little company of passengers was grouped around them.

"There's one of the reefs then, I

calculate," ejaculated the American, dryly, and with infinite promptitude.

For as the captain spoke there was a shock and a long shivering, a rending of timber and a tremulous rasping that had run along the ship's keel like electricity, communicating with the passengers through their shaking limbs, and shooting a thrill to each nerve and fibre ; while simultaneously rose shrill cries and wild shouts from the decks. Then came another shock, like the despairing struggle of a stranded whale, and a duller sound of the splintering of timbers.

CHAPTER IX.—THE SHIPWRECK.

Winstanley forgot his gout as the captain was suddenly sobered. There was a rush for the deck in the first alarm, as of men who preferred to perish in the open, rather than to be drowned below decks like rats and cockroaches. Once on the deck there was little to be seen, but a great deal to be heard. The lantern gave but a fitful light, throwing faint reflections on the grey wreaths of watery vapour. But out of the darkness, that was to be felt rather than seen, came appalling evidences of a general panic. The Highland fore-castle passengers, more accustomed to their hills than to the sea, had lost their heads, and were bellowing and "routing" like the cattle. And the cattle, where they had not broken from the fastenings, had been jumbled together in prostrate heaps, and were plunging madly in the effort to regain their legs. The more placidly minded sheep were bleating piteously ; the ship was groaning, though it could not roll, in response to the surf that was dashing against its sides ; and

the funnel was belching forth volumes of steam and flaming showers of sparks, for something had gone wrong with the fires or the machinery.

In the darkness and the turmoil, so far as could be judged, there were only four men who had kept their heads. These were the young mate, the shock-headed steward, the cool American, and Mr Jack Venables. As for Mr Winstanley, he was in mortal alarm, though he had too much self-respect to show it ; and, rather to give himself time to calm down than for any better reason, he addressed a remark to Mr Venables, who happened to be close by his side, and was busy stripping off coat and boots.

"It's all over with us, I suppose."

But Jack's courage was of the kind that is highest in emergencies, and his spirits rose buoyantly to the excitement of danger.

"Not if I know it, sir. We may all get away in the boats ! and if not, I mean to try to save myself by swimming. The steamer is upon rocks, and one may find a

footing on them, till some passing vessel comes to take us off."

Thus having spoken on the spur of the moment, the selfishness of his speech struck him. "I wish this crippled old gentleman had not been here,"—so, we may suppose, ran the current of his thoughts. "But as he is here, I am bound to see him through it, worse luck." And then he added, "If you keep by me, or rather, stay by the companion here, I shall come back before I leave and will gladly give you a helping hand."

Hardly even when talking to Mr Moray, had Jack ever invested words to better purpose. And indeed in this case, Winstanley had reason to be doubly grateful. Not only did the calmness of the young stranger help him to regain his self-possession, but it was a promise of self-sacrifice which he felt assured would be redeemed. So whether his feelings were too much for him or not, he merely squeezed the young gentleman's hand by way of answer.

While we have been lingering over this conversation apart between the only two people in whom we are greatly interested, incidents were being fast crowded into seconds. Had it been daylight, one might have looked on at a veritable panic. The Celts in the steerage had sufficiently recovered from their stupor to be seriously alarmed. They had animal courage enough, but it was ill adapted to unfamiliar circumstances. They made a rush at the boats, and carried them by storm. Their frenzied impetuosity knocked a hole in the bottom of one, which happened to be loaded with coils of wire fencing. As for the other, by the aid of the seamen it was lowered into the water *tant bien que mal*. But that boat was to the windward side of the ship, and the surf was strong, and

the gear slightly fouled at one end. Naturally the boat upset under a cascade of human beings, most of them weighing considerably over fourteen stone; and then it became a case of "save who can," for no one had a thought to bestow upon his neighbours. Two or three who fell struggling in the deeper water, were swept to sea or under the ship's counter, and were seen no more. The rest, to their surprise and pleasure, regained their legs, and were either washed up against the swamped boat and the swinging tackle, or, clutching wildly at each other, their feet struck on the rocks, up which they scrambled through the shoaling water, till, clinging to the slippery sea-weed like limpets, they had time for recollection and a long breath. Then one or two, with more presence of mind than the others, shouted out that there was firm footing under the ship's boys; and when the good news had slowly circulated on board, relief from the apprehension of immediate danger brought about a wonderful reaction. Their safety need only be a question of time, and the indolent side of the excitable Highlanders turned upwards again.

And with a falling ground-swell and calm weather they might have been well contented to wait indefinitely. But as the first breaking of the dawn began to streak the eastern sky, there came an ominous sighing and whistling through the shrouds and the funnel-stays, which caused the mate and the shock-headed steward to prick their ears and exchange significant glances. The wind was getting up, as the glass had prognosticated a gale: and when the waves rose with the wind, the Cuchullin would probably go to pieces. Nor, as the breaking of the day made objects visible, was the sight of the reef on

which they were hard and fast by any means reassuring. Low and rugged, and covered with slimy brown and green sea-weed, it looked very like the slippery back of the fabulous kraken, and nearly as likely to be submerged at any moment. Assuredly it was sunk far out of sight in spring-tides; probably the seas washed over it in such a gale as was coming on.

The captain, although comparatively sobered by the catastrophe, was dazed, and disposed to take gloomy views, as he well might be, considering that under the most favourable circumstances his certificate was sure to be suspended by the Board of Trade. So he declared that as the vessel might break up at any moment, the passengers had better take refuge on the reef, which might be trusted not to go to pieces, though it was quite on the cards that it might be swamped.

Had an imaginative artist sought materials for the illustration of 'Robinson Crusoe,' assuredly he might have found them in the scene on the reef, which was locally known as the "Kittiwake's neb."

The steerage passengers began by saving their personal property, and piled bags and blankets and wooden "kists" about them. Then, for sheer want of occupation, and by the offer of free rations of "Tallisker," they were persuaded by the mate and the steward to unload the live cargo. We can't say that humanity had much to do with it. So half-wild cattle that had the strength and suppleness of the famous Chillingham here, were persuaded to leap from the deck into the water. The sheep followed their leaders, when one or two had been caught up and pitched over bodily. And then there was a scene, such as might have been witnessed when the ark brought up,

after its seven month's cruise, on Mount Ararat. The cattle crowded together, as is their custom, with stooping heads and staring coats, playfully goring each other in the ribs with their tremendous horns, till the melancholy ocean resounded with their bellowing. The sheep, that jostled up against the oxen, although confining themselves to plaintive protests against their bad luck, were scarcely in the sum total less vociferous. We daresay the rats left the stranded ship, though, had they foreseen the fate that must befall them, they would have stuck by her so long as she floated. But the old cabin cat, which had slipped over the side when his betters set him the example, was perhaps more to be felt for than any person. He lowered himself over the side, from a natural instinct of self-preservation; but really he cared very little what became of him. He was too miserable, as he picked his way among pools of sea-water, and set down his feet gingerly on the rock that were slimy with trailing sea-weed. His principles and his instincts denied him the resource of suicide—for we believe that, among all the *memorabilia* of remarkable cats, no one instance has been recorded of an animal that drowned itself. But he strolled recklessly under the very noses of collies who, in ordinary circumstances, would have made but a couple of mouthfuls of him. As it was, in the presence of a common danger, they saw him pass with an indifference as appalling as his own, to any one who had leisure to remark the phenomenon. And so the desponding Thomas went on, till he ran up against a gentleman seated in a chair, when the domestic instincts asserted themselves, the more decidedly for the delightful surprise.

He rubbed his sides against an up-turned pair of trousers ; he made the wearer wince by smoothing his whiskers against a muffled foot : and then he gave a flying leap out of the damp, arching his back and purring pleasantly against a wool-len waistcoat.

In fact it had been a pretty though a pathetic sight to see Mr Venables piloting Mr Winstanley to the highest point of the reef, and there depositing him on one of the two or three cane-bottomed chairs to be found on board the Cuchullin. Willis, who was still amenable to orders, though he had lost all power of initiation, followed, carrying the dressing-case that was placed under his master's feet. And there sat the Honourable Wilfred Winstanley, gathering the skirts of a trailing ulster round his legs, more painfully sensible than ever of his signal folly in flying so hastily from his comfortable quarters at Somerled. But if he had a feeling stronger than that of self-reproach, it was of gratitude to the cheery young fellow who had done so much for him. Already Winstanley had asked his name, and had been duly informed. To say nothing of Jack's sanguine spirit being contagious, it was difficult to seem depressed when the youth was near. He would have sat self-rebuked while Mr Venables was quietly conversing, as if they had come together in a club smoking-room in Pall Mall. We will not undertake to say that there was not some swagger about Mr Venables, but are content merely to record how he behaved.

"I should prefer a cigarette, as I have gone without breakfast, But 'needs must be,'—you know the proverb, sir ; so, by your leave, though I think I heard them say you objected to smoking, I shall light a pipe. If I keep well

to leeward, perhaps you won't mind."

But after a few whiffs of the pipe, a fresh idea seemed to strike him.

"What a picturesque sight it is, and what comical groups of figures these are in the foreground ! Gray's odes come back to the memory. Confusion, fright, ay, and famine too, and ever so many more realistic conceptions of the passions. And what a bit that is, *d la* M Gudin at the Luxembourg, for example, where the waves are breaking against the sides of the old ship, with the sea-weed streaming on the curl of the surf, and boxes and trunks bobbing about among the breakers."

And from another of the numerous pockets in his shooting-jacket he produced something between a memorandum-book and a sketch-book, and, smiling, proceeded to draw. Winstanley looked at him curiously. His hand was steady and his eye was clear, and he handled the pencil for all the world as if he had been sitting on a camp-stool in some sequestered glen, with an immediate prospect of muffins and coffee. Jack marked the glance, and answered it in about five minutes, by carelessly passing his sketch-book to Winstanley.

"Admirable, sir, admirable!" was that gentleman's verdict ; for in fact his young companion, by some sharp and bold touches, had given a very fair idea of water in motion ; while the rendering of the more prominent figures in the foreground was a clever blending of the grotesque with the veracious. And though he immediately dismissed the matter from his mind, the memory of it afterwards did Jack good service.

Indeed more serious considerations were soon to preoccupy him. A business of the kind must be

slow at best, whether to those who figure in it or to those who read about it; so we spare our readers many of the details. But with the rising tide, driven over the reef by the winds, the water at every seventh wave or so actually washed over Winstanley's boot-and slipper; and although it became pretty plain that no one need be actually drowned, it seemed probable that his constitution might be shattered for life. He was so lost in a labyrinth of gloomy thoughts, that he was indifferent even to the presence of the irrepressible American, who opined that he would rather run the chances of being sky-rocketed from high-pressure "engines" among the snags of the Mississippi, than be cast adrift on an empty stomach in that herring-pool, when a man should be turning his attention to mutton-chops and ham-and-eggs.

Nothing could be more welcome, then, than the sight of the Clansman, steaming southward on the way to Oban. She answered the signals of distress, and bore down to the assistance of the wreck. The embarkation was a matter of time, and of some little inconvenience as well; but the reef acted as a kind of breakwater against the freshening gale, and the castaways were hospitably welcomed into snug quarters, where they had an opportunity of changing their damp garments.

"I seem to have known you from your boyhood," said Winstanley very warmly to his young acquaintance. "You have stood by me in a way I shall never forget; and as you were ready to do me one inestimable service in the way of risking your life, I mean to ask you to do me another. It's the way of the world, you know, so you need not be surprised."

"Very willingly," answered Jack with graceful readiness—not the least readily, no doubt, that he felt instinctively that the favour to be asked was to pave the way to some return for his generous devotion.

"Well, I fancy I may take it for granted that your time is at your disposal, otherwise you would hardly have shipped for a cruise in that miserable old tub. I mean to land at Oban, where I fear I may have to lay up and take medical advice. If you could bestow a day or two on a fretful invalid, I should feel, if possible, more grateful than I do at present." And he threw as much significance into his words as was compatible with consideration for a gentleman's feelings.

And as we know something of Mr Venables's views and nature—and as he made it a golden rule never to miss a chance—we need hardly add that he jumped at the invitation with a cordiality which greatly flattered his senior.

CHAPTER X.—A HIGHLAND TRAGEDY.

A man must be a bore, or a social wet blanket, if he be not missed from the society of a Highland hall. Venables was missed by his uncle; he was missed by his cousin Grace; he was missed and mourned by Donald Ross and the gillies. And, no doubt, he might

have been more missed than he was by Leslie, had it not been for certain significant intimations, dropped in the course of the conversation which Glenconan had with his elder nephew according to arrangement. It is true that Mr Moray said very little, being

almost inclined to repent his frankness with Jack Venables; and as he had already nearly burned his fingers, he was apprehensive of further indiscretion. Yet he did give the young laird of Roodholm to understand that Grace might possibly take it into her head to marry, and that for himself he had every confidence that his daughter would choose wisely. He hinted, moreover, that he had said much the same thing to Venables, which was quite enough to send Leslie to a scrutiny of his own feelings. And now that the scrutiny was forced upon the young man, he was surprised at the dulness of his own perceptions. But once entered on so fascinating a course of study, he made astonishing progress; and self-communings, illustrated by more assiduous perusals of his cousin's pretty face, taught him a thousand things he had scarcely suspected. Strong and sluggish natures like his sometimes, nevertheless, answer promptly to the spur; and when a spark is set to a slumbering passion, it burns like the subterranean volcanic fires in Java or Japan, where the peaceful landscapes smile over the fragile crust that may explode at any moment in a violent conflagration.

As for Grace, she had rather felt towards Leslie as her father felt. He was a man she would have turned to in any trouble. She believed in his honour as she did in his Christianity. She was sometimes almost startled by the eloquent expression he gave to those deeper emotions that were silently at work within her. She felt that the active sympathy of one so stanch and so earnest might be everything in certain circumstances. Nevertheless, like her father, she rather admired than loved him, cousins as they

were, and thrown continually into the most familiar intercourse. But hitherto she had seen life almost entirely on its sunny side, and so she found herself more at home in the society of the more voluble Mr Venables.

And hitherto, and so far, the stars in their course had been unquestionably fighting for Jack. But now, as it chanced, Mr Leslie was to have his innings at a moment when it seemed to come to him as an interposition of Providence.

Moray appeared one morning at the breakfast table with care upon his brow.

"I have got a batch of bothersome business letters to answer, and I think that nowadays I hate business as much as I once used to enjoy it. And this is such a beautiful day, that it seems all the more pity to waste it. Needs must, however, when—you know the rest—and there is no help for it. Suppose you and Grace arrange to do something, Leslie. I shall be all the more resigned if I know you are enjoying yourselves."

Leslie brightened up. Good-hearted as he was, and fond of his uncle, he scarcely sympathized with him in his present trial. And although generally truthfulness itself he was guilty of a *compliment de circonstance*.

"I am sure we are very sorry, sir; but you know the motto of the Russells, 'What must be, must be.' Perhaps if you can knock off your work, you may join us later in the day." Then turning to his cousin, "What do you say, Grace? Shall we take the waggonette and the chestnuts, and drive over to Tomnahurich?"

Now the lively Grace, with all her regard for him, rather shrank from a day's *tete-à-tete* with her somewhat solemn cousin. If she

had told the truth, she would have confessed that he almost frightened her; and she seldom, unless when his animated conversation made her forget herself, felt altogether at ease in his company. But on this occasion, as her father had said of his correspondence, there seemed to be no help for it, so she resigned herself with alacrity and a charming grace.

In fact, Tomnahurich had a mystical attraction for her—all the more so, that on the only occasion when she had visited it, she had for once been out of tune with her favourite companion. Jack Venables had been at her elbow through a brilliant afternoon, and his lively rattle had jarred upon her sensibilities, as the blaze of the sunshine had seemed unsuitable to the scenery.

The waggonette with the chestnut cobs came round, and Grace stepped up on the box-seat by the side of her cousin. The taciturnity of the driver surpassed her apprehensions—one may easily have too much of peace and calm. Leslie seemed embarrassed and lost in thought, although he handled the reins carefully over the somewhat breakneck roads. He would talk with almost feverish fluency for a minute or two, and then relapse into long silence. Had Grace been more self-conscious, she might have feared he was on the brink of a proposal, although assuredly nothing was further from his thoughts; and he was one of the last men to throw away a game by precipitation. She was immensely relieved when the carriage pulled up, and the groom was left in charge to await their return, the horses being picketed on a patch of turf. Now she was no longer hand-locked to a spasmodically galvanised corpse, and could break away to gather wild flowers or on any other excuse. Her pet terrier ran yelping on

ahead. Leslie loaded himself with the luncheon-basket, with a rug, and his cousin's sketch-book, and strode along by her side. The scenery was picturesque enough and wild enough. What had once been a tolerable driving-track ended where the waggonette had drawn up, and was only continued by a rough footpath, winding up a steep green hill. There were solemn associations with it too, inconsistent with picnics and luncheon hampers; for many a century before Tomnahurich had been consecrated by the Catholic Church, and it was still sacred to the feelings and the superstitions of the neighbourhood.

If we are not abroad in our Celtic philology, Tomnahurich may be translated "the hill of the fairies"; at all events, that is the name by which the Celts call it in the Saxon. It is a little churchyard on a bold knoll or bluff, in the midst of which might be traced the foundations of a Romish chapel. Many generations had died and gone to dust since the sacred edifice was abandoned for the distant kirk of the Reformed religion. The surrounding glens had been depopulated by emigration, and descendants of the dead folks might be flourishing beyond the Atlantic, owning forest farms, or running lumbering concerns in Canada, speculating in shares in Wall Street, or in grain and pork in Chicago. But still the gillies and shepherds of the neighbourhood would bring their dead to repose on the mound of Tomnahurich.

"Can you not fancy," observed Leslie, as they climbed the hill—and it must be confessed that he might have chosen a more uninspiring subject,—“can you not fancy the melancholy little processions that have followed the path we are treading? It seems to me that those who live in loneliness like

this must miss the departed who were dear to them more than we, who are thrown into the whirl of life and may forget now and again, if we cannot altogether console ourselves. We bury our dead out of our sight, and so far we are done with them; but in these Highland solitudes, after the funeral as before it, do what they will, the dead must always be with them. Look at the peasants of the Breton coast, with their sombre fancies, which nevertheless are sad realities to the survivors."

Grace, although sufficiently impressionable, was taken aback, for she happened to be thinking of the cold chicken in the basket. But *tant bien que mal*, she caught the ball on the rebound, and dropped sympathetically into her companion's gloomy train of thought.

"And can you conceive anything more sadly depressing than a child's funeral here in the winter? There is no putting it off, because the few mourners have gathered together from great distances, perhaps hazarded their lives in the blinding snowstorm and the snowdrifts. And the mother, broken down by watching and grief, is toiling up the hill behind the little coffin; and even the father's strength has been overtasked in digging through the frozen ground; and the light of the cottage has been laid to rest in a spot that is the very abomination of bleak desolation."

With such cheerful talk they beguiled the way, till, having reached the summit of the grassy steep, the lonely churchyard lay full in front of them. Whatever it might be in the depth of winter, the spot seemed enchanting now. It was on the grassy crest of a rocky headland, surrounded on three sides by a brawling stream. A clump or two of venerable yews had been dwarfed and warped by exposure to the

weather; and beneath and around them, and within the dilapidated wall, were the mounds, not a few of which were almost level with the greensward, with a sprinkling of grey and moss-grown headstones. The lustre of the noonday sun was gilding the scene he could hardly brighten; but by way of compensation, the mountains to the westward were bathed in all the glories of his golden light. Both Leslie and his cousin involuntarily paused, simultaneously struck by the pathos and the splendour of the spectacle. A still more touching surprise was awaiting them. As Leslie was about to move on, Grace laid a finger on his arm. But it hardly needed her whispered "Hush!" to make him stoop forward and listen with all his ears. There was a murmur of childish voices, which would have sounded strangely spirit-like had it been midnight instead of brilliant noon.

Grace stole softly forward, her cousin following. Another moment, and the chicken and her hunger were altogether forgotten.

What they saw was such a scene of unaffected grief as might have inspired the pen of a Hogg or the brush of a Wilkie. There was a newly cast mound beneath the boughs of a yew, and near the brink of the precipice. And by it a comely young woman was kneeling, her chin in her hands, her elbows on the grass, and her swimming grey eyes gazing wildly into vacancy. Though their feelings were stirred in sympathy with her grief, the on-lookers nevertheless were struck by the details of the picture. Setting the refining influences of a profound sorrow aside, the mourner was graceful beyond the generality of women of her station. If her complexion was freckled and her cheek-bones were somewhat high, there was beauty with great sweet-

ness of expression in her features. The dress was of simple black, neatly fitted to the strong yet well-shaped figure; and in the rich tresses of her hair, as they hung knitted over her neck, the auburn and the red changed to gold in the sunbeams. That the mother had been forgotten in the sense of her widowhood, was shown by the boy who was clinging to her skirts, and scared at his mother's unwonted forgetfulness of him. And a yet younger child, a bright little girl, was laughing and crowing, as she plucked at the gowans.

Leslie drew back instinctively, though the mourning widow was both blind and deaf. And Grace had accompanied him in a sympathetic movement, though in another moment she had retraced her steps. She could not leave the mourner without trying to comfort her, though feeling in her heart that consolations must be cast away. Indeed the poor woman scarcely acknowledged the light hand laid upon her shoulder. She cared as little for what was passing near her as for her children; and the touch and the presence of the stranger were neither profanation nor intrusion: so that Grace, with all her earnest desire to bring help, stood silent and abashed before that speechless sorrow. She said nothing: she stooped and kissed the children, and then she withdrew as quietly as her cousin had withdrawn.

But if her feelings had been moved to their depths, she was full of feminine curiosity, as she vowed to herself that those feelings should find practical relief. Strange that she should have lived for weeks in those mountain solitudes, and know nothing of some cottage tragedy that must have been enacted almost under her eyes. That a tragedy there was,

there could be no doubt in the world: the woman's face was eloquent with a story of sorrow which she must find an interpreter to explain.

The interpreter was there, of course, all ready to her hand. She spoke very little to Leslie, who did not say much himself; and for once his cousin understood and admired his reticence. But she flew at Donald Ross, as he said afterwards, though with all due respect, "just as if one of the terriers had been flying at the throat of a badger."

Donald, as a rule, was ready enough to talk, especially to the young mistress he adored. But on this occasion, he was reserved and embarrassed, which naturally whetted her keen curiosity. And for once Miss Grace spoke peremptorily, like her father, and went very roundly to the wished-for point.

"You understand me, Donald," she exclaimed, stamping her foot on the heather, and turning her back ostentatiously on the contents of the luncheon-basket—"you understand me, and you know what I mean to say; and so you will please to tell me everything about her."

Donald raised his stalker's hat, and scratched his grey locks in profound perplexity. He looked for help towards Mr Leslie, but Mr Leslie refused to understand him, being almost as curious on the subject as Miss Grace. Then he burst out in dire perplexity—

"Deil be in me, if there is anything I would refuse to tell you, Miss Grace, but it was Glenconan himsel'—and——"

"Oh, if you mean that my father has forbidden you," began the young lady, with a calculated sternness which nearly drove the unfortunate retainer beside himself.

"It's not precisely that, neither, Miss Grace : if it were, you might have tied me to a hart's horns before I would have told. But you know yourself that the laird may mean much when he says little ; and though you may be sure that his hand is always as open as his heart, and that the widow you were speaking of has wanted for nothing, it's my belief he would wish to keep anything from you that would be troubling you."

"Well, I see how it is," responded the young lady, softening down her tones into witching seductiveness, and breaking into a smile which went straight to Donald's heart. "My father meant for the best, but chance has been too much for him. I mean to get to the bottom of this melancholy story, and may you not just as well tell it as he? He knows even better than you that I never care to be kept waiting."

Donald looked inquiringly at Leslie. Like every one else, he had an instinctive confidence in the honour and good sense of the Laird of Roodholm. Leslie simply nodded. He knew that Grace would have her will, and she might as well have it sooner than later. If he were called upon to interfere, he could always defend her with her father. And Donald, who was full of the tale he had to tell, and who rather prided himself on his gifts as a *raconteur*, broke away in full cry at the sign, like a hound after a wounded deer.

"It's three-and-thirty years past next Martinmas since I came first into the Strath, and I've never known a finer lad in it than Angus M'Intyre. No day was too long for him, and no hill too stiff ; and I have known him bring the deer home upon his shoulders, when the pony would have broken down in the bogs. It was seven years ago, or

it may be six, that he was married upon John Rutherford's daughter, and brought her here. Her father was a shepherd from the South country, and they say that he was sore against the match—for Rutherford was obstinate as one of his own tups, and would always be set against the Highlandmen ; but between Angus and the lassie, they had their way. That Rutherford would miss her, you may believe ; and as for Angus, many a time he has said to me that his heart was sore and sorry for the old man. And they had the two bonnie children you have seen with her up at the burying-place there. I have never married myself, Miss Grace, and I never mean to, begging your pardon ; yet I will not say but what I have sometimes wished I was Angus.

"I may have wished it one Saturday at even, just two months ago, if I had little thought at the time that I would never forget that night. We had been giving a look round the braes at the back of Benavoured, for we knew that Glenconan would be down in a week or two. And Angus, he would be insisting that I was to stop with him for supper, and he would be stirring the toddy, and the glass was going round, but yet the bit wife was the cheeriest thing in the cottage. And he had told me that there was a litter of foxes in the cairn on Funachan : 'deed, and the shepherd had been complaining that very day, and he said he would need be getting out some of the terriers and seeing after them. And so I said to him, after the last glass, that we would be seeing about them ; and if it was a Providence, as the minister might say, it was a Providence of the wrong kind, but that very night I found the fox-hunter from Lochloy at the kennels.

"He's an old man is Peter—as keen after the foxes as his dogs, but as stiff as Jock Rutherford; and he would by no means stay with us over the morrow, that was the Sabbath. He was bid to be on the Monday with the tacksman in Coulin; but if we thought well of it, he would take the cairn on Funachan on his road. So at last I said, and always will I rue it, that he was a wilful man, and must have his way.

"Had it not been for Peter again, I would have turned back upon the Sunday when we met the minister. He said but little, but he looked the more, and many's the time that I have minded on it since. And there was a beast of a raven that would follow us, croaking, all the way up Glendocharty; and Mary—that's the woman ye saw, Miss Grace—she would have keptit back Angus from going with us, for both of them were dressed and bound for the kirk. And Angus himself, for once, was not that willing, but he said that if we were set upon it, he was to show us the place; so he whistled upon Smourach, his bit terrier, and gave a kiss and a smile to the wife.

"The bitch fox had gone to her earth but little before us, and the dogs had opened on the scent or ever we got near to the cairn. And Peter likes ill that any should interfere with his pack, so Angus had picked up Smourach, and was holding her in his arms. Well, the big fox-hounds they stood whining and scraping outside; and terrier after terrier would be sent in among the rocks, and when we laid our ears to the ground we could hear the fighting and the scratching. But the vixen, she had the best of them; and dog after dog came back, blown and bleeding and the day was getting on, and Peter growing desperate. It

was then that Smourach made a spang out of Angus's arms, though I well believe he could have held her had it pleased him; but he was proud of the bit thing, and would always say that when once she put in her teeth, the worse she was worried the deeper they went.

"But you are wearying, and I am coming to an end, and a doleful end it was for Angus. The battle had begun worse than before, and we all of us were laying and listening, when some of the stones slippit from beneath us. Angus was like a man distracted, for the way was closed, and unless we could open it out again, he had looked his last upon poor Smourach. So he said it behoved him to go in, and when I looked in his eyes I saw there was no holding him back. So he strips his coat and in he crawls, and we could hear to him scraping away among the stones, when the biggest of the blocks above him settled down. He must have moved some of the small stones inside that upheld it. And then there came a groan through the cracks that sent a grue to our hearts, and we knew that the great rock was upon him. We were down upon our knees, and tearing away, till our hands were bloody and our nails were rent; and we got down till we saw the hair on the head of him, and the big bells of the sweat that were standing on his forehead.

"Can you shift it, Donald?" he could just groan out; and I would have given ten years of my life to say 'ay' to him. But unless we had brought half-a-dozen men with bars of iron, we could never have lifted it one inch. But when we could say nothing, and he maybe heard Peter sob—for the fell old hunter was crying like a woman—all he breathed out was, 'Then the Lord be good to me!'

and these were the last words that he ever spoke."

Donald, absorbed in his story, had been stimulated by Grace's attention. But when he looked at her on finishing, her pale face frightened him. It was not for nothing that Moray, knowing her impressionable temperament, had been afraid of shocking her by so tragic a tale. But with her sensitive nerves she had her father's courage; and it was to the fate of the unfortunate widow that she turned her practical mind. She forced Donald to tell how the news had been "broken" by strong men who could not control their emotion, and startled the bereaved widow by the very intensity of their sympathy; and though she could not go to the cottage in her present agitation, thenceforth her thoughts were full of its occupant.

Moray was both shocked and angry when he met the excursionists on their return. His daughter's nerves had been sadly shaken by listening to such a narrative so near its scene. On consideration, it was not difficult to obtain his forgiveness for Donald, who indeed, in the circumstances, could hardly have helped speaking. But time after time he cursed his own folly in letting his daughter go near the churchyard and the cottage. So far as material help to the widow went, he had nothing with which to reproach himself. His liberality had fed and clothed the little family, and was ready to assure its future in the bargain. But what haunted Grace, with that slow death-agony under the boulder, was the look in the widow's face. There was a touch of the insanity that brings no oblivion—that distorts the horrors which memory will revive. Judging by the effects on herself, a comparatively unconcerned listener, she

could guess how the tragedy must have told on the woman it so deeply affected. And with her actively sympathetic nature, inaction was out of the question. Even her father, now that the mischief had been done, felt that she must be left free to follow her warm impulses. Yet she shrank herself from approaching so sacred a grief, distrusting her power of bringing either consolation or alleviation.

It was then that Leslie had his opportunity—though, to do him justice, he never thought of it as an opportunity at the time; nor did he know till long afterwards how well he had improved it. In which he differed altogether from Mr Venables, who, although perhaps to the full as warm-hearted as the other, could never for the life of him help thinking how he could turn everything to some personal account. There is nothing which a sensible girl who is vaguely contemplating marriage craves so much in a lifelong companion as intuitive sympathy and intelligent affection. They are the supports on which she hopes to lean—the shelter that may shield her from the storms of life. And now Leslie's sympathy, although it was silent, was as clear to her as the intelligence, the perspicuity of which almost alarmed her. He said very little, as was his custom, but she felt that his loving penetration was searching out her innermost thoughts. And she knew, besides, and she had good reason to know, that he was employing himself very energetically in her service.

When she came down to breakfast, after a restless night, she had missed her cousin, and asked about him.

"He called for a glass of rum-and-milk in his room, and was

away by seven o'clock, they tell me," said her father. "He did not vouchsafe any message for us, but I fancy we both guess his business."

So in the early forenoon Grace was sauntering on the path that led over the hills towards Mrs M'Intyre's shieling. Nor was it long before she saw Leslie approaching. He was coming on leisurely, as if lost in thought, but at sight of her he quickened his pace.

"Well, Ralph!" was all the greeting she gave him, and yet there was that in her look and in her tone which amply rewarded him for his early expedition.

"Yes," he said, answering her unspoken inquiries—"yes, I have been to see her, and I think I see, too, how we can help her."

Grace was of course all anxiety; but she repressed the questions that came crowding to her lips, leaving her silent cousin to do the talking. And he spoke with so much good sense and with such sincere feeling, that she had never listened to him with greater pleasure.

"You of all girls will understand me, Grace, when I tell you that I never was so nervous in my life as when I walked up to the door of that poor woman's cottage. There is something so sacred in a calamity like his, that it seems sacrilege for a man and a stranger to approach it. And when sorrow has almost turned the brain, in our ignorance and our reverence we are almost hopeless to cope with it. In fact, had it not been for one thing, I should have gone on hesitating"—he did not add, "as you have been doing."

But Grace finished the sentence for him in her mind, and full of her gratitude, was ready to reward him.

"And I know what that one thing was, and that you wished to

spare my weakness an effort. Nor shall I forget it, Ralph—of that you may be sure; and now tell me everything."

"Really, I don't know that there is much to tell, except that I have prepared the way for you, and left her hoping for your visit. Though that is something, for I am sure you will do her good, and indeed may probably prove her salvation. The fact is that the poor woman has been neglected, though not intentionally; and mismanaged—with the best intentions. Your father, as of course he would, gave his people *carte blanche*, and in the way of meal, and milk, and mutton, she has everything heart can desire. I believe that the neighbours, from Donald Ross downwards, would each one of them cut off a hand to spare her a finger-ache. But they scarcely understand her case,—as how should they? And living in the shadows of that brooding solitude—you remember our talk of yesterday, just before we saw her?—her dead is always with her; the horrors of that death-scene are always present with her; and I believe, from what she let slip, that the husband she loved haunts her in her visions of the night like the vampires of the Hungarian legends. Unhappily, perhaps, she seems to be a remarkable woman for her station: what you might have been," he added, with a serious smile, "had you been born a shepherd's daughter and similarly bereaved."

"But the minister?" said Grace. "He is a good man—is he not? Has he not gone to visit her?"

"The minister is an excellent man, and his visits have been only too frequent. From what I have gathered, and it was a good deal, his views are as strong and as sincere as they are narrow. He pities her; he feels for her, accord-

ing to his lights ; but he is persuaded that the terrible death was a judgment. And even in consoling the widow, in his heart and conscience he feels that he must vindicate the ways of God to man, and says as much. So Mrs M'Intyre, believing in her pastor's spiritual infallibility, is tormented by the notion of her husband's doom. If he was made a flagrant example of the sin of Sabbath-breaking—if he was doomed here, he may be condemned hereafter."

"How terrible !"

"Is it not ? But that is just where you may do unspeakable good, since you can talk religion as well as common-sense, and speak to her of mercy instead of judgment. But it is not for me to tell you, Grace, how you may best comfort the widow. I should as soon think of giving a hint to one of the angels : if you cannot bring consolation to the cottage, then I throw up my hands. And even the minister is a candid man, and may listen to reason and the views of Glenconan's daughter. You go to work with him and with Mrs M'Intyre, and come to me and report progress. In the meantime, I wash my hands of the whole matter—unless, indeed, you should want money."

"That you assuredly shall not do, or I take no further step ; and I cannot use a stronger threat, for I believe that we *shall* succeed in our errand if we only go hand in hand. But you must still be my guide, and, you may be sure, I shall be very docile. Only tell me what I am to do, and you shall have no cause to complain."

Leslie never in his life felt half so happy, and he would have very much liked to have told her so. A community of interests had been established on the highest and holiest grounds ; and now he

had proved and realised the virtues and the qualities with which he had always desired to credit his cousin. She was worth the loving, and she was worth the living and the working for, so from thenceforth he made up his mind to do both the one and the other ; and when Leslie's mind was made up on a subject so all-important, it was by no means easy to move it. That happy moment seriously altered the odds against hopes and ambitions on the part of Mr Venables. And it is more than probable that Grace made a guess at what was passing in his mind ; for her colour rose, to her confusion, as her cousin's eyes were riveted on her.

But the confusion passed away, and the community of interest remained. The cousins went like angel-visitors to the cottage, sometimes together, more often separately. They found that the widow could be won to confidences in a *tete-à-tete*, though she would shrink into herself when the two came together. But their sympathy began to teach her acquiescence, which might gradually grow to contented resignation. And although it was not often she spoke the thanks she looked, she could occasionally be eloquent in her gratitude to either when the other was away. She had warm feelings, or she could never have suffered so intensely ; and she had been educated above her present station. But let her enlarge on the praises of the absent as she might, she could never tire the patience of either of the listeners. Grace would hear how her manly cousin—who had saved the life of another at the risk of his own, to the admiration of the darling hill-men—could be tender and impassioned as any woman. She heard involuntary comparisons

drawn, much to his advantage, between him and the very worthy minister, in whom, nevertheless, as we have said, Mrs M'Intyre profoundly believed. She admired the tact, though it seemed profanity to call it tact, which he had shown in these delicate circumstances; and reproaching herself for her blindness hitherto, she rather ran into the opposite extreme. In short, she admired him and loved him more and more, and day by day—as a cousin; so it must be confessed that Mr Leslie's chances were looking up.

While as for him, in the true spirit of poetry, he took to idealising the maiden he had longed to adore. Before he thought seriously of loving her, he had been hampered by his distrustful good-sense. He had admired the natural grace of her movements; he had meditated sonnets to her beauties when the fancy seized him; he had liked the liveliness

that sparkled in her *badinage* with Venables. But whether it were from a dash of jealousy or doubts as to her depth, he had feared that she and Venables would be fitly matched. For Leslie, with no touch of personal vanity, cherished a good deal of quiet intellectual pride. But with him, as with her, there had come a reaction, and now he was the more ready to worship that he had rashly criticised. Now he figured her to himself as the ministering angel, bringing messages from heaven to desolate hearth; and then, in a natural sequence of ideas he thought what her presence would be in her husband's home. Altogether, if Mr Venables had really left his heart in the Highlands, when he went southward full of self-confidence, to study the advancement of his fortunes, he might have had good grounds for uneasiness, had he known all that was going on.

CHAPTER XI.—THE HON. WILFRED WINSTANLEY.

But come what might of his affair with his cousin, Jack Venables had been doing well for himself. In Winstanley he seemed to have met what the spiritualists would have called his affinity, allowances being made for the difference in their ages. He had succeeded as the other hoped to succeed, by social gifts, by tact, and by enterprise. To be sure, as Jack learned by degrees, Winstanley had had certain advantages in starting. He heard the story bit by bit, and, as it were, incidentally; yet Winstanley was really frank, and willing to be so, for he loved to find an admiring listener. And Jack sat at his feet with unfeigned and flattering interest, storing up the treasures of wisdom which he

hoped to turn to practical account.

Mr Winstanley had been the second son of the Viscount Wreckin; and through his mother he had inherited a handsome independent fortune. Had he been more humbly born and poor, he would probably have done what Jack had dreamed of doing, and turned artist, launching out as an adventurer in full Bohemia. He was fond of art, and had fair talents that way, which possibly he might have cultivated to profitable purpose. He was fond of pleasure too, and it might well have been a question whether art or pleasure would have got the upper hand, had he given himself over to leading the life of a *Mürger*. As it was, the family traditions kept

him straight, and fair play was given to his talents and his ambition. For two or three generations the Winstanleys had been distinguished in public affairs, and they had the habit of intermarrying with the governing Whig families. Taking to politics or diplomacy like ducks to the water, it was only a question with the Hon. Wilfred as to the direction in which he should steer.

He might have sat for a borough, which was in reality a close one, though the Winstanley influence was decently ignored. Or he might try his fortunes in diplomacy, with the absolute certainty that he would be taken care of. The young aristocrat hardly hesitated. He had gauged himself and knew that he was clever, but he was not very sure that he was profound. He did know that he detested drudgery, and he was doubtful whether he might shine as a speaker. He would as soon have committed suicide off hand, as condemned himself to committees and the study of blue-books; and making a slow reputation as a hard-working official, seemed a game that was far from being worth the candle. On the other hand, diplomacy attracted him. He liked the idea of looking forward in the future to twisting sultans and kaisers and kings round his fingers. While in the meantime, with the strong interest he could command, he might serve his apprenticeship in pleasant places.

On the whole, he had had little reason to complain; and if he went through a good deal of disillusioning, he had the grace to acknowledge that the faults were his own. He was quick, but not industrious; he was adroit, but scarcely reliable. He began at Florence as *attaché* at the Court of the Grand Duke in the good old days, and there he made his repu-

tation as a man who could shine in society, and who was an artistic connoisseur. He went in for society as a matter of business, and for the fine arts in the way both of business and pleasure. He ran up bills, but he could afford to pay them; he entertained, because he liked entertaining, while other *attachés* ate at their master's tables, going out to dinners, and giving none in exchange. So he early made his mark as a brilliant young man, who might do the State good service were he promoted. And even then, his pleasures, and what apparently were his extravagances, proved profitable. He flirted freely with maids and matrons, saying little of importance, and picking up a good deal. He was the very man to be set to match some feminine diplomatist, who, being sent out to shear her dupes, never dreamed of going home shorn. The ingenuous youth had a way of looking into women's eyes, which at once disarmed them and drew them on. It could hardly be called deceit, it came so naturally to him. Then his art purchases were even more immediately lucrative than his social talents. He had grand passions for particular pictures. There was one Madonna by Correggio, which he bought at what appeared a fancy price, and fitted up in a fancy case, carrying it with him wherever he went. The passion being sated, he sold Our Lady afterwards for cent per cent on the original purchase-money. In fact, although he might be taken in now and then, as must be the fate of the very shrewdest in experience, he generally put out good money at usury, and could realise his investments in the aggregate at a handsome profit.

He married young and for love, which might appear to be inconsistent with his practical character; but, as it chanced, the lady

had a considerable fortune, which was subsequently increased by an unexpected inheritance. The lady had likewise a will of her own, as she had a right to have, and we daresay there may have been domestic tussles before she was permitted to indulge it. At any rate, the pair ultimately signed terms of peace, and agreed to go each their own way as they liked, coming together on a footing of friendship when they pleased. Winstanley had gone through all the successive grades, from unpaid *attaché* to first secretary of legation; and then he became a promising Minister, although he had never risen to the rank of ambassador. That, as I said, was very much his own fault. He was able, but only too versatile, for he wanted ballast. He loved change of scene, and was willing to be shifted anywhere, from the Hague or Frankfort to Quito or Peking. And all that could certainly be predicated of him at the Foreign Office was, that he would scarcely be settled ere he would wish to change again. And a change he invariably succeeded in effecting, which may have gone far to account for his complacent submission, though he went revolving in secondary spheres in place of rising to the primary.

So that even in the discharge of his strictly official duties, the proverb of the rolling stone could hardly be said to apply to him, for he rolled out of one good berth into another, and had always respectable pay and appointments. But he was a man who had many irons in the fire, and had a marvellous instinct for never burning his fingers. As to that, we may let him speak for himself, as it was a subject on which he was especially fond of speaking when he could make sure of his audience. Winstanley detested the semblance of boasting, but he loved sympathetic

appreciation. Perhaps it was the unfeigned and only half-conscious flattery of Jack Venables in that respect, which had drawn the elder adventurer most strongly towards the younger one.

Jack had expressed his admiration and astonishment at the number and variety of those irons of Mr Winstanley, though he had merely heard of a few of them in course of conversation.

"Well, you see," said Winstanley, complacently, "I have lived in many places in my time, and have always made it a golden rule to turn my opportunities to the best advantage."

"And such opportunities!" sighingly ejaculated Jack.

"Such opportunities, you may well say. No man can do more in the speculative way than one of her Majesty's diplomatic representatives in foreign parts. The misfortune is, with men sent to Peru or Patagonia, or those sort of places, that very few of them have money. They try to live on their incomes, or to save upon them, and they fail ignominiously. Now I had money, as it happened. Trade is forbidden even to consuls now, very properly, though the poor devils have often to starve upon a pittance, in obedience to peremptory though righteous rules. But a free Briton may always invest his money in whatever quarter of the globe he happens to find himself. A diplomatist has always access to the best information, and should be able to count on his position for guaranteeing his being honestly dealt with."

"So, sir?" again ejaculated Jack, hanging on the lips of the speaker, in the confident hope of successfully imitating him.

Winstanley was pleased, and went on; perhaps he had his reasons besides.

"Look here, Venables; I have

taken a liking to you, and I don't mind telling you something of my financial story for your guidance. I owe you a debt, and I hope to do more than this to pay it; meantime I am sure I may count on your discretion, for you conceive it is not to every one that I should give a *catalogue raisonné* of my investments."

Jack merely bowed and smiled,—he was too deeply interested to interrupt; and Winstanley proceeded:—

"I don't pretend for a moment that the list is exhaustive; indeed I have been perpetually selling out and buying again elsewhere, for even a steady run of gains would pall intolerably. I merely give you some illustrative cases, and mention what I consider the turning-points in my career.

"I flatter myself my first hit was an inspiration, and the boldest of all. When in the Foreign Office as a mere boy, I had made friends with Isaacs, the great Jew financier; or rather, Isaacs had condescended to take notice of me. By way of extraordinary favour, he had allotted me a few shares in the Universal Bank. The shares had gone up like balloons, and they came down again as if the gas was escaping through rents, in the panic of—I don't precisely remember the year. I was in mortal terror, for the liability was unlimited; and I was in blessed ignorance of the bank's transactions and resources. I rushed off to my friend Isaacs. I think I must have taken his fancy, as you have taken mine. It was after dusk, in his private sitting-room, and before answering he went to see if the door was shut, and if the shutters were safe. Then he came back to me with an air of mystery, and told me that the concern was absolutely safe. 'Schwartzchild' was the only word he dropped

besides, and I could see that he would shut up like an oyster if I cross-examined him. I thanked him, and shook hands, and chewed the end of meditation through a sleepless night. If I sold, I should lose seriously, and might possibly be let in after all. But if the bank was safe, it must be the time to buy, for the falling shares were to be had for a song. It was all a question of Isaac's good faith, for he was assuredly in the bank's innermost secrets, and as to that I exercised my diplomatic perceptions. I was persuaded that the man meant kindly by me, so I gave commission to sundry brokers to buy Universal shares. The bank was smashed up long ago, but I sold all I had bought afterwards, contenting myself with a modest gain of £8000. Had I chosen to hold on, I might have made half as much again; and had I stuck to the investment, I should have been a ruined man.

"Those were pleasant times in Paris, when I was second secretary in the Faubourg St. Honoré, during the golden days of the Empire. As a member of our Legation, I knew nothing and wished to know nothing of such things as that luckless 'Mexican Question,' which came on later, and was handed over to De Morny for the payment of his debts. But I cultivated M Haussman and the MM Fould. I used to dine with those magnificent gentlemen pretty frequently, smoking cigarettes over sweet champagne at dessert, and by putting two and two together I exercised my prescience and picked up sundry lots of house property on the lines of the Prefect's projected demolitions.

"I had got rid of most of them before I was sent on to Vienna, to profit by my Parisian experiences in the Kaiserstadt. I had my knife and fork at Schwartzchild's mansion in the Leopoldplatz, and I

had my little interest in the house speculations, in the Danube Valley Reclamation schemes and the Hungarian Land-banks. Well, well, perhaps it was lucky for me that the Viennese society and blank days of bear-shooting in the Carpathians bored me. At all events I was in Pekin, having cleared out everything Austrian at handsome profits before the *krach* came in the great exhibition year. By the way, I remember that relative of yours, Mr Moray, in China, but we will talk about him another time. I soon tired of China, and touched nothing there. No doubt there was money to be made by outsiders in silks and opium. But the fact was, it was the kind of money-making which is likely to leave pitch on the fingers. And as I caught an ague besides, I went to sun myself and get rid of the shivers in the dry uplands of the Columbian Republic. There I dipped into coffee-plantations, and dyed my hands in indigo-growing,—always in the way of legitimate investments, remember; and I should have done a good deal better than I did, had it not been for the moral tone of the country. I give you my word of honour, that when you get mixed up with a syndicate there, the rascals would leave even a British Minister in the lurch; and more than once I had to come down handsomely, to save the credit of those whom malevolent scandal might have called my confederates. But I pray you to observe, my young friend, that though I have made many hits in my time, I never in my life did one dishonourable action, and so I saw my properties in Columbia seriously depreciated. The more was the pity. Had others only run as straight, I might have left the Legation there with a handsome fortune. And I don't know, after all, but what I should have re-

gretted it, for satisfactory speculation is the salt of life.

"But I am getting prosaic, and I fear I begin to twaddle. Oh yes, it is no use your protesting—I take your civility for what it is worth. And at any rate, I should say little about my squabbles with the Foreign Office.

"As for successive Foreign Secretaries, I always found them the most impracticable of men." And here Mr Winstanley smiled. "They said—and you may imagine how absurd the accusation was—that I was never to be counted upon from month to month; that the health and digestion which seemed perfect in London were always breaking down in foreign climates; that I was perpetually giving myself leave of absence; and that if they sent a specially important despatch, I was always crossing it *en route*. You conceive, that to a gentleman of comfortable means, there was no dealing with officials of that stamp. So I intimated courteously, that, leaving my services at her Majesty's disposal, I was quite content to be shelved in the meantime. To do them justice, they took me readily at my word, offering me the ribbon of St Michael and St George, which I declined respectfully with thanks."

"Did you not find it a little dull, sir, that change to a private life?"

"Dull, my good friend! dull! Why, I am never dull. I have always been too full of occupations. As for being bored sometimes, I don't say: that is a different thing altogether, and the common lot of well-to-do humanity. At this moment I have no end of promising schemes on hand, as you will learn when we improve our acquaintance. But *apropos* to being bored, having a conscience and some consideration for you, I shall ring for my candle, and wish you good-night".

NEW VIEWS OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS : THE "OTHER POET" IDENTIFIED.

II.—RESEMBLANCES.

THE argument for the identification of Dante as the "other poet" referred to by Shakespeare in Sonnets lxxviii.-lxxxvi., as conducted in this Magazine for June of last year,¹ consisted exclusively of a comparison of the description given by Shakespeare of that other poet and his writings with what is known of Dante and with the prominent characteristics of his verse. Although that argument is in itself conclusive and complete, yet the position established by it admits of being confirmed and illustrated by an argument founded on the resemblances observable between the Sonnets of Shakespeare and certain of the writings of Dante. The conclusion to which this special argument leads is, that it is highly probable that Shakespeare, in writing his Sonnets, set some of the writings of Dante before him as the model according to which he framed the structure of his sonnetic poem, and developed the thought, idea, or device expounded in it. But the probability thus arrived at becomes a certainty, when to the argument from resemblances is added another founded on identities in the thought, imagery, and phraseology occurring in the Sonnets of Shakespeare and in some of the writings of Dante. And the certainty thus attained, when combined with the demonstration given in our former argument, will "make assurance doubly sure."

The argument from the resemblance between the Sonnets and certain of Dante's writings may be

restricted to a comparison of the structure of Shakespeare's sonnetic poem with the structure of one very notable poem of Dante ; and to a comparison of the method of the poetic argument in the Sonnets with the poetic method according to which Dante develops his idea of Beatrice in the "*Vita Nuova*," the "*Commedia*," the "*Convito*," and the "*Canzoniere*," or minor poems.

The resemblance of the structure of Shakespeare's sonnetic poem to a poem of Dante's in the "*Vita Nuova*," is such as seems to prove that Shakespeare framed the *structure* of the Sonnets, considered as a continuous poem, according to the pattern set before him by Dante.

As we have had no pioneer in the process of investigation which has led us to the conclusions to which we have come respecting the Sonnets of Shakespeare in relation to the writings of Dante, it is necessary that we should here distinguish between the structure of the individual sonnets and the structure of the sonnetic poem. This distinction is the same as that between the shape of the several stones in a building, and the shape of the building as made up of the stones fitted into their respective places. The stones may be all of one shape or size,—in this respect their structure is the same. But by their adjusted relations to each other, and their subordination to the main purpose and idea of the architect, they make up the one whole called the building, or the architectural effect designed by the builder. So is it in the structure

¹ See Blackwood's Magazine, June 1884.

² Macbeth, iv. l. 83.

and adjustment of the sonnets in relation to the sonnetic poem considered as a whole.

By the conjectural and gross-witted criticism, Shakespeare's "deep-brained sonnets"¹ have been regarded and treated as if they were a miscellany or jumbled madrigal of poetical exercises written without a purpose, and thrown together without a plan.² By legitimate criticism prosecuted according to the inductive or Baconian method, these sonnets are found to be not only carefully numbered and detailed by their author or "only-begetter,"³ but also to be set in their adjusted places according to their designed relation to the main idea and purpose of the poet.

Each sonnet is composed according to the idea, form, or structure of a sonnet indicated in "Certayne Notes of Instruction for the making of Verse or Rhyme in English, written at the request of Master Edouardo Donati by George Gascoigne, Esquire." This enchiridion or little handbook was published in 1575. In it Gascoigne says: "Some think that all poems (being short) may be called sonets, as, indeed, it is a diminutive word derived of *sonare*; but yet I can beste allowe to call these sonnets which are fouretene lynes, every lyne conteynynge tenne syllables. The first twelve to ryme in staves of foure lynes by cross metre, and the last two ryming together do conclude the whole."⁴ With only two exceptions, all the Sonnets of Shakespeare consist of

fourteen lines. Of these two, the one—Sonnet xcix.—is made up of fifteen; and the other—Sonnet cxxvi.—of only twelve lines. This latter sonnet seems to have been intentionally left unfinished. It is in another respect marked and peculiar; for in it there is no alternation in the rhyme. The six successive couplets of which it consists, rhyme with each other, without the "cross metre" of which Gascoigne speaks in his "Notes of Instruction." With only one exception—Sonnet cxlv.—all the sonnets consist of lines made up of ten syllables. The lines of this Hermit Sonnet contain each only eight syllables. These three—xcix., cxxvi., and cxlv.—are, as we think, designedly exceptional in their form or structure, each of them being intended to serve a special purpose in relation to the poetic development of the thought and the adjusted distribution of the several parts of the poetic whole. Another sonnet—lxvi.—is at least unique, if it is not exceptional in its form and structure. It is framed according to a method by no means uncommon at the time, although it is the only instance of the kind in Shakespeare's Sonnets. It holds the mirror up to the Elizabethan age; and it bears a very marked resemblance to certain places in Gascoigne's "Steel Glass,"—more particularly to the place beginning with the words—

"For whiles I mark this weak and
wretched world."
and ending with the sentence—

¹ See *A Lover's Complaint*, by Shakespeare.

² The most recent and most elaborate example of this critical method is furnished by Dr Charles Mackay, who says: "The sonnets are not arranged in consecutive order, but are thrown pell-mell into the mass."

³ Dedication of the Sonnets to their Author, Parent, or "Onlie Begetter," by the Publisher, T. T. (Thomas Thorpe).

⁴ *Certayne Notes, &c.*, by George Gascoigne. See *Arber's Reprints: or Gascoigne's Works* edited by Hazlitt.

"And none serve God but only tongued men."

So striking is the resemblance of this sonnet to Gascoigne's poem that it might be entitled "Shakespeare's Steel Glass : showing the image of the Elizabethan time." In it Shakespeare, as if condensing and reproducing Gascoigne's sentiments, begins saying—

*"Tired with all these, for restful death
I cry,"*

and ends by a repetition of the same statement—

*"Tired with all these, from these would
I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone."*

What is this but a reproduction of the sentiment of Gascoigne in a contextual connection in exact accordance with that in which the same sentiment is found in Gascoigne's "Steel Glass"?—

*"And to be playne, I see myself so
playne,
And yet so much unlike that most I
seemed,
As were it not that Reason ruleth me,
I should in rage this face of mine de-
face."*¹

The structural function of this unique sonnet—lxvi.—in relation to the whole sonnetic poem, is the same as that of the three exceptional sonnets. For as each of these three serves to indicate a division and a transition in the poem, so this unique sonnet divides and unites the two parts of the main theme; the first part consisting of Sonnets i.-lxv.—the second, of Sonnets lxvi.-cxxxvi. This division is manifestly intended by Shakespeare. And, according to it, the first half of the poem divides itself into a number of minor

poems, all adjusted in their specific relations to the main theme, thus : i.-xlii., xiv.-xvi., xvii.-xix., xx., xxi.-xxiv., xxv., xxvi.-xxxv., xxxvi.-xlii., xliii.-xlvi., xlviii.-lii., liii.-liv., lv., lvi.-lxv. The second half of this poem is divided into two parts by the sonnet of fifteen lines—Sonnet xcix.—thus : lxvi.-xcviii., xcix.-cxxxvi. Each of these parts admits of being subdivided according to the development of the thought in this truly marvellous section of Shakespeare's "deep-brained" sonnetic poem. Although the divisions and subdivisions which we have noted are those indicated in the poem itself as by Shakespeare's finger-mark, yet there is another principle of division also indicated by the finger-mark of the poet, according to which the sonnets of the main series may be distributed; thus—i.-xxxv., xxxvi.-xcvi., xcvi., xcvi., xcix.-cxxxvi. This division may be said to overlap or cross-divide the other; but this is only in appearance, not in reality; and due attention to it will greatly help the interpreter, for it will oblige him to keep before his mind certain ideas on which the whole poem depends. The sonnets addressed to "the mistress" of the poet's "passion"—Sonnets cxxvii.-cliv.—are divided into two sub-poems or parts by the octosyllabic sonnet—cxlv. Of these sub-poems the first consists of Sonnets cxxvii.-cxlv.; the second of Sonnets cxlv.-cliv. In these two parts the poet's "mistress" is contemplated and addressed in aspects and relations not only distinct, but also totally different the one from the other, according to the distribution of his passion made in the "two loves" of Sonnet cxlv. In the first division of the Handmaid Series the

¹ The Steele Glas : a Satyre copied by George Gascoigne, Esquire. Together with the Complainte of Philomene : an Elegie devised by the same Author. 1576

poet's "mistress" is first observed and addressed as she appears under the veil of sorrow and reproach—Sonnet cxxvii. She is then addressed as she is seen in the midst of light, music, and joy—Sonnet cxxviii. From the contemplation and praise of this form of beauty, love, purity, and joy, the poet, in Sonnet cxxix, by a rebound of thought after the manner of Dante, descends as into the Inferno, and depicts the hideous form of false love or lust, saying—

"The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust."

This is lust, concupiscence, or hell in the heart: it is sin in conception or before the act, "till action,"—

"A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell."

This sonnet is one of the most vivid, comprehensive, and masterly of all the Sonnets of Shakespeare. It is really a condensation by the use of nine epithets of Dante's nine-circled Inferno. It is followed by a triplet in which certain very definite attributes and qualities of the poet's love are described and commended—Sonnets cxxx-cxxxii. In Sonnets cxxxii., cxxxiii., expression is given to facts the most

sacred and momentous, and to thoughts the most profound. To these are added the remarkable group—the sonnets of the "*will*"—cxxxiv.-cxliii. Can any of the critics give a rational explanation of the term *will* used seven times in Sonnet cxxxiv., three times in Sonnet cxxxv., and but once in Sonnet cxliii? Sonnet cxliv. is an expository sonnet, designed to serve, in relation to the sonnets addressed to the poet's mistress, the same function as the expository sonnets, annexed to Sonnet xx. in the main series, are designed to serve in relation to the whole theme. In this sonnet the poet tells us that he is conscious of "two loves." Does it follow from this confession that he was, as the director of a certain society and some of his German teachers and English satellites represent him to have been, a grossly sensual man? Does it follow from this that Lord Herbert or Lord Southampton, or any other young man of title or of high degree, was the one angel—"The better angel a man right fair"? or that some sluttish woman was the other angel—"The worsen spirit, a woman coloured ill; my female evil seeking to win me soon to hell"?¹ Does not Dante, times without number, make the same confession? Does not Michael Angelo, in some of his most beautiful sonnets, make confession of the same duality in his great and pure soul? Does not the Apostle Paul himself groan out the same confession in the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans? Must we therefore think of Dante,

¹ A short sentence of Erasmus expounds the meaning of Shakespeare's words in this sonnet (cxliv.): "*Mulierem autem Carnalem hominis partem intellige. Hæc est enim Eva nostra per quam versutissimus serpens, ad mortiferas voluptates mentem nostram illectat.*"—See *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, by Erasmus, 1518. An English version of this, entitled 'The Manuell of the Christen Knyght,' was "imprinted at London the xv. day of Novembre 1588."

Michael Angelo or the Apostle as if they were sensually-minded men? The critics might be so rational or as poetical as not to forget that man's soul consists of reason and passion, and that "man new made" consists of spirit and flesh. They might remember that Augustine very often speaks of the "flesh" as a sort of "female evil," in every man. Their studies may not, however, have been so much in Augustine as in a literature unknown to Shakespeare, by the help of which they think they can best expound the writings of England's great and gentle poet, as if he—"Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,"¹—were such a one as themselves. To them and to all such he says in Sonnet cxxi. :—

"No, I am that I am, and they that level

At my abuses reckon up their own :

I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel ;

By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown ;

Unless this general evil they maintain,
All men are bad, and in their badness reign."

The critics, forsooth, are all spirit, not flesh. They are "plain cannon fire, and smoke and bounce."² So are other critics and accusers belonging to the order represented by the "suborned informer" mentioned in Sonnet cxxv. Sonnet cxlv. is exceptional in structure ; it is octosyllabic, and serves to indicate a transition in the development of the poetic thought—

a transition for which Shakespeare prepared the reader by the "two loves" spoken of in the preceding sonnet. In Sonnet cxlvi. the poet holds a conference with himself—a colloquy with his own soul.

"Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,

My sinful earth—these rebel powers that thee array."

The repetition, "my sinful earth," serves for confirmation, as Augustine so often remarks, respecting similar repetitions. The distinction made in this sonnet between the soul and the powers that invest it and rebel against it, governs all that is said by the poet in Sonnets cxlvii.-clii. Sonnets cxlvii.-cxlix. form a triplet, in each of which analytic description is given of one of the three radical vices or passions of human nature (Augustine). Sonnets cl., cli. treat of the soul proper, as distinguished from the rebel passions in Sonnet cxlvi. And in Sonnet clii.—an insoluble problem to the critics—Shakespeare expounds and applies an idea derived by him, like many other ideas in the Sonnets, from Augustine. The two terminal sonnets, cliii., cliv., serve as two envoys to the whole of the preceding songs. In the one of them the natural aspects, uses, and relations of his great theme are expounded ;³ in the other, the spiritual aspects, uses and relations of his great theme—in so far as it is "the marriage of true minds"—are expounded and extolled.⁴

¹ Milton's sonnet prefixed to the 1632 edition of Shakespeare's works.

² King John, ii. 1. 462.

³ "Against *strange malis* a sovereign cure."—Sonnet cliii.

"Marrie therefore ; for marriage will destroy
Those passions which to youthful head do climb,
Mothers and nurses of all vain annoy."

—*Geron to Hilar* : *Arcadia*, fol. 201, ed. 1593.

⁴ "Love's fire heats water ; water cools not love."—Sonnet cliv.

"Much water cannot quench love, neither can the flood drown it."

—*Canticles*, viii. 7 : Geneva version.

To the most superficial observation these sonnets distribute themselves into three distinct parts or poems: the first the proemium, i.-xxv.; the second the theme, xxvi.-cxxvi.; and the third the handmaid or auxiliary, cxxvii.-cliv. Each of these three main parts is subdivided according to the progressive development of the thought in each sub-poem. The way in which they are articulated having been indicated in our analysis of the whole and of its several parts, we may, for the purpose of comparing Shakespeare's poem with one of Dante's in the "*Vita Nuova*," accept the division of the poem as consisting of proemium, theme, and auxiliary. With this division or distribution of the parts of Shakespeare's sonnetic poem, let the reader now turn to Dante's poem in the "*Vita Nuova*," beginning with the words—

"Ladies who in Love's lore are deeply read,
I of my lady would discourse with you."

This exquisite poem seems to have been the poetic model of the structure according to which Shakespeare framed and distributed the parts of his poem. It is made up of only five sonnets, divided into proemium—the 1st sonnet; into theme—the 2d, 3d, and 4th sonnets; and into auxiliary or handmaid—the 5th sonnet. There can be no doubt that in the composition of this little poem Dante put forth his utmost skill. And we do not wonder that he thought it worthy of a most minute, exact, and elaborate analysis and exposition in the comment annexed to it. Let the reader turn to it in the original Italian, or in the version of Sir Theodore Martin, or in that of Rossetti, and we doubt not that the impression produced

on the reader's mind, after a careful study of the poem of the five sonnets, and of the comments annexed to it, will be that Shakespeare used this poem as the model according to which he shaped and distributed the several parts of his own great poem of a hundred and fifty-four sonnets. For not only is Shakespeare's poem divided into proemium, theme and auxiliary, but each sub-poem divides itself according to the sonnets occurring in it, just as according to the analytic comment of Dante the several parts of his little poem are subdivided. Great in the poetic faculty, these two illustrious writers were great in the faculty of poetic analysis. Nor can the writings of either poet be interpreted without the exercise of some little analytic power and skill on the part of the interpreter.

The second part of the argument founded on the resemblances between the Sonnets of Shakespeare and the writings of Dante consists of a comparison of the poetic *method* according to which Shakespeare develops his thought in this poem, in relation to the invention or device on which all the sonnets depend, and the method according to which Dante develops the idea of Beatrice.

The complex and complete idea or device of Shakespeare's poem is figured in the 20th sonnet. This idea or device is by him called "the master-mistress" of his "passion." All the sonnets that precede the 20th lead forward and upward to it; and all those that follow after it are designed to expound and develop what is included in it. For there is nothing in the poem that is not summarised or comprehensively figured in that sonnet. The three ideas of youthful beauty, inward worth, and immortal life, govern and de-

termine all that is expressed in the first nineteen sonnets. Youth, with external beauty or grace, is the theme of the first thirteen sonnets—i.-xiii. Inward worth—"truth in beauty dyed"—is added to the youthful form in Sonnets xiv.-xvi.; and to this immortality or eternity is annexed in Sonnets xvii.-xix.

In one of the remarkable poems of Dante, which he gives and expounds in the "Convito," it is said of true worth, gentleness, or nobility—

"That God bestows it only on the soul
Which in its earthly garb He sees
From imperfection free; so that the seed
Of happiness unites itself to some,
Planted by God in mind, disposed
aright.

The soul that this celestial grace
adorns,

In secret hides it not;
But soon as to its earthly mate espoused,
Displays it until death."¹

The immortal beauty—that is, the eternal love—of which Shakespeare sings, in renewing itself in "love's fresh case" takes to itself a form or body through which it may give to itself visible expression in "all external grace" (Sonnet liii.) To this body, as the outward organ or visible expression of this love, belongs the beauty or the bloom of youth. And of this beauty the rose is the poetic figure or symbol. But youthful beauty, like the bloom of the rose, soon passes away. As a thing of time it is mortal, hence the necessity of propagation with a view to the perpetuating of its beauty by a continual succession:

"From fairest creatures we desire in-
crease,
That thereby beauty's rose might never
die;

But as the riper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory."

"And where you seem to esteem love a thing far too heavenly, to take his ground, in a matter which in your opinion partakes so deeply with an earthly or base substance, see in what error you fall and evil do you acknowledge the great felicity which is in love, as tending only to so happy an end (in marriage), by the which is procured an immortality in our mortal bodies by the propagation of ourselves in our likes; in which point Nature resembles the wise and discreet mother, who, foreseeing the benefit that in time to come will prove necessary for her child (wherein his slender age makes him ignorant), by gifts, presents, sweet and pleasant speech, with other allurements apt to entice his youth, she pampereth and draweth him on (without that he thinks of it) to direct and lead to the purpose which in herself she hath laid and imagined, until, by a long assistance of time and ripe confirmation of age, this child is fashioned fit for the purpose of his mother, to both their great contentments: even so Nature, our wise and foreseeing mother, pretending in herself the *increase of the world* (Sonnets i., xi.), doth sow in us, from our beginning, certain little seeds of love, which we suffer easily to succeed in us, till they congeal to a ripe and perfect fruit, which is not that pleasure which we hold in community with other creatures, but rather, as I have said (Signior Monophylo), to make us immortal in our mortality."²

This is precisely the idea of love worked out in Sonnets i.-xiii. For all these proceed on the transitoriness or mortality of external beauty. Hence the argument for marriage, with a view to the propagation of what shall be the perpetuating representative, successor, or heir of "beauty's rose."

The external grace so highly commended in the first thirteen sonnets is but the visible or outward expression of that grace, beauty, or worth which is, within

¹ Convito, translation of Canzoniere by Charles Lyell.

² Monophylo, by Sir Geoffraie Fenton, book i. fol. 44. 1573.

the mind, "truth in beauty dyed" (Sonnet ci.) The poet's "love" includes in it inward worth as well as outward grace—

"In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you, for constant heart."

—Sonnet liii.

The beauty of his love as outward and visible is commended by all; but it is far otherwise with it as it is inward, spiritual, and invisible. It is neither seen, understood, nor appreciated (Sonnet lxi.)

The distinction between the outward and the inward is prominently presented in many of the sonnets, implied in them all, but it is for the first time brought into conspicuous view in Sonnets xiv.-xvi—the sonnets of youth wedded to virtue, or of beauty wedded to truth—

"From thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And constant stars, in them I read such art
As *truth and beauty* shall together thrive,
If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert;
Or else of thee this I prognosticate:
Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date."

—Sonnet xiv.

Truth added to beauty is the theme of Sonnets xiv.-xvi. This addition is really an evolution of what is included in the poet's "love"; it is an exposition rather than an addition. The "inward worth" (Sonnet xvi.), which is the theme of this group of sonnets, is "worth" within the form of external beauty, addressed by the poet in the first thirteen sonnets. Of this inward worth, the beauty previously extolled is but the visible symbol or expression. The re-

lation of the one to the other is fully developed in Sonnet liv. :—

"Oh, how much more doth beauty
beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth
doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem,
For that sweet odour which doth in it live."

In this sonnet the difference between the "old" and the "new" creature—between youth without inward grace, and youth having that grace—is very definitely indicated:

"The canker-blooms have full as deep
a dye
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their masked
bud discloses:
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd and unrespected
fade,
Die to themselves, *Sweet roses do not so;*
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
Ann so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, my verse distills
your truth."

In illustration of the sentiment with which this sonnet concludes, and as serving to throw light on the whole of what is said by Shakespeare respecting youthful beauty wedded to inward worth, the following words of Philip de Mornay—Lord Plessis-Marly—are worthy of the attentive consideration of the interpreter. The identity of the sentiment expressed, taken with other instances of the same kind, is such as to warrant the statement that Shakespeare very carefully studied some of De Mornay's works :—

"The child that beholds his father treading of goodly grapes, could find in his heart to blame him for so doing, for he thinketh that they should be

kept still, and cannot conceive to what use the treading of them should serve ; but the father, knowing the goodness of the fruit better than the child (for he planted them, tended them, pruned them), considereth also that within two months or little more they would wither or die away, and therefore *to preserve the virtue of them, he maketh no account of the eating of them, but treadeth them in the fat to make wine of them.* And when the child comes afterward to discretion, he museth at his own folly, and acknowledgeth that at that time he played the very child, notwithstanding that as then he thought himself wiser than his father. And after the same manner doth he when he sees him *make conserve of roses, violets or other flowers.* He is sorry to see them marred (as he thinketh), and is ready to weep for it ; and he cannot be quieted, because he would make nosegays of them, which anon after would wither, and he himself would cast them away by the next morrow. Now consider, I pray thee, whether without any further inducement thou find not thyself to resemble this child. God who made the good men that which they be, hath no less consideration and love towards them than those which bewail them. He knoweth to what end their life serveth in this world, also he knoweth when it is time to gather them, and to put to His hook or sickle, to cut them down, that they rot not upon the tree or upon the ground, and how long they may be preserved in their kind. *And thinkest thou it strange that He should take some when they be fresh and green, to preserve them all the year long, or that He should make conserves of their flowers to be kept a long time, or that He should of their grapes make wine ? Thinkest thou it strange, say I, that He should, after a sort, make their savour, their sweet scent, and their strength—that is to say, their godliness, their uprightness, and their virtue—to live after them, which otherwise should be buried with them ?* and that they which for themselves could not have lived past three or four years, should live to the benefit of the Church, and

the commonweal, not years, but worlds of years ? ”¹

The beauty of which the poet sings includes in it not only external grace and inward worth, but also immortality. Beauty in relation to a bodily form is mortal, in relation to a created mind it is mutable : but the beauty of the poet's love is immortal ; it is above change of mutability—above mortality. This property of the poet's love is celebrated in Sonnets xvii.-xix. In them the form of youthful beauty and virtue is seen to be immortal and immutable. The external and the internal become one with the eternal. The order is first that which is natural, sensible, or visible—bodily beauty in a youthful form ; next that which is inward, mental, or spiritual—“truth and beauty”—“truth in beauty dyed” ; and afterward that which is immortal—beauty's “eternal summer.” All this, distributed into nineteen sonnets, formed but one undivided idea in the poet's mind. It was his new love, or it was the “new creature” begotten by the eternal love : considered in relation to time, it has a bodily form subject to change and to mortality ; and considered in relation to eternity and to God, it is immortal. This is the poet's “lovely boy,” this is his “love.” Of this love he sings, and predicates things seemingly contradictory or paradoxical, all which, however, are strictly true, if respect be had to this love—(1) as newly sprung up in his heart ; (2) as eternal in the Godhead ; and (3) as coming and going between the poet and the King eternal, immortal, and invisible. Let love be regarded in its subject, in its object, and in its

¹ The Trewness of the Christian Religion, by Philip of Mornay (pp. 170, 171, ed. 1592).

synthesis of subject and object, and all the paradoxical or seemingly contradictory statements respecting it in these sonnets will disappear or vanish away.

This idea of youthful beauty, truth, and immortality, governs the whole poem. It is, however, only a part of the complex poetic device figured so strangely and so elaborately in the 20th sonnet. For this idea Shakespeare seems to have been indebted to Dante, and his method of elaborating it is undoubtedly after the model of Dante. For while Dante begins with the vision or appearance of Beatrice as a child to Dante as a child—that is, begins by exhibiting in his poem a more youthful form than that presented by Shakespeare in the Sonnets—yet the next and more notable apparition of Beatrice was in Dante's eighteenth year. In both cases external grace is vividly depicted as the expression of Dante's love, while to this all excellence, beauty, virtue, or worth is added, till at length, after the figured death of Beatrice, the beauty, which is spiritual and immortal, reveals itself to the eye and heart of the poet. It is also to be noted, that while it was the vision of Beatrice or the chief good that excited in Dante the first stirrings of the new life, the love itself which then for the first time revealed to him Beatrice or his true blessedness—*restra beatitudo*—and which, as he tells us, began from that time forth to hold sovereign sway over his soul, and to which his soul had so readily been betrothed, appeared to him in the form of a youth of exquisite beauty and perfection.

In illustration of these statements, let that part of the "Vita Nuova" be read and studied in

which Dante, describing his longings after excellence, and confessing his shortcomings and failings, tells us of a very notable and memorable appearance to him, of love in the form of "a youth arrayed in garments of exceeding whiteness, and wrapt in thought." Let what is there written by Dante be studied by the interpreter who wishes to understand and to expound the ideas and figures in Shakespeare's Sonnets, and more particularly the method according to which he develops his great idea.

The transition from the natural to the spiritual, and from the mortal to the immortal, is by Dante figured by the death of Beatrice, and her ascension to Paradise. By that poetic death and ascension, Dante indicates that, dying from that time forth to the things of sense and time, he made it the aim of his life to live unto the things above—the things spiritual, heavenly, and eternal:—

"To him (that is, to death) were all my wishes turned,
That instant when my lady fell
A victim to his cruelty.
*For then the beauty of her pleasing form
Departing from our view
Was changed to beauty spiritual, immense;*
From which through heaven was spread
The light of love, which angels hailed.
And saw so excellent and rare,
And to their intellect profound and clear
A miracle it seemed."¹

While Shakespeare seems to have derived from Dante his idea of the eternal love taking to itself the form of youthful beauty—called by him in the 1st sonnet, "beauty's rose"—he appears to have received from Erasmus the hint or suggestion that "youth" as "beauty's rose"—the spring-time and bloom of life—might be a fit theme for

¹ Rime Di Dante Vita Nuova, by Charles Lyell. 1849.

such a poem as that in Sonnets i.-xix. In "The Poetical Banquet" Hilary says: "Now let us try to which of us the garden will afford the most sentences." To this Leonard replies: "How can so rich a garden but do that? *Even this rosebud will furnish me with what to say: As the beauty of a rose is fading, so is youth soon gone: you make haste to gather your rose before it withers: you ought more earnestly to endeavour that your youth passes not away without fruit.*" "It is a theme," says Hilary, "very fit for a poem." Carinus remarks that "As among trees every one hath its fruits, so among men every one hath his natural gift." "As the earth, if it be tilled," says Eubulus, "brings forth various things for human use, and being neglected is covered with thorns and briars, so the genius of a man, if it be accomplished with honest studies, yields a great many virtues; but if it be neglected, is overrun with various vices." "A garden ought to be dressed every year, that it may look handsome," says Sbrulius. "The mind being once furnished with good learning, does always flourish and spring forth." To this Parthenius adds: "As the pleasantness of gardens does not draw the mind off from honest studies, but rather invites it to them, so we ought to seek for such recreations and diversions as are not contrary to learning." "Oh, brave!" says Hilary, "I see a whole swarm of sentences."

In the colloquial sentences of Erasmus, spoken at "The Poetical Banquet," we not only have the youth of life figured by the rose

—"beauty's rose"—but we have also some of the most prominent and significant ideas and figures which occur in the proemium to Shakespeare's main theme, more particularly in the little poem which consists of Sonnets i.-xix., as subdivided, i.-xiii., xiv.-xvi., xvii.-xix. Keeping in mind the sentiments of Erasmus in the sentences which we have quoted, and adding to them the pithy and pregnant sentence of Augustine—"Succession is here necessary in a place where decease is mourned: but there, in the resurrection, because there shall be no deceased, neither shall successors be looked for, for they shall not begin to die there,"¹—let the 1st sonnet be read and be thoughtfully studied.

Let the gross idea of the Sonnets being "a madrigal of procreation," or the idea of the "increase" desired being a bodily or fleshly progeny, except in so far as this is a legitimate and subordinate desire on the part of those entering into the state of lawful marriage, "honourable in all," and here commended, be forever banished from the mind of the reader and interpreter of this sonnet, and all the other sonnets of Shakespeare. For here the marriage desired is "the marriage of true minds" (Sonnet cxvi.), and the "increase" desired is nothing else than fruitfulness in every good thought, word, and work—fruit becoming the marriage of youthful beauty to truth, virtue, and godliness. For as Augustine, Shakespeare's greatest teacher, says, "Deeds and words are fruit

¹ The Familiar Colloquies of Erasmus: The Poetical Banquet. This is only one instance out of many that might be given in which Shakespeare's knowledge of the "Colloquies," "Apothegms," "Praise of Folly," and other writings of Erasmus is unquestionable.

² Augustine on Psalm lxvi.

³ Ben Jonson, The Silent Woman, ii. 2.

and leavea." "Our works are our children." "And he that liveth to God singeth unto God; he psalmeth to his name that worketh unto His glory."

To the same effect are the words of Philip de Mornay, Lord Plessis-Marly :—

"The sensitive life conceiveth an imagination which hoardeth up itself in the memory; but as he proceedeth from the senses and from sensible things, so doth it depart out of itself. The reasonable life hath its *conceptions and breedings*,⁴ yet more inward than all the rest, for it hath its reflection back to itself, and we commonly term the doings or actions thereof by the name of conceptions or conceits, after which manner *the learned sort do call their books their children*."

With this agree the words in Sonnet xxiii.—

"O, let *my books* be then the eloquence And dumb presagers of my speaking breast; ;"

in Sonnet xxxii.—

"Had my friend's muse grown with this growing age,
A *dearer birth* than this his love had brought,
To march in ranks of better equipage ;"

and in Sonnet lxxvii.—

"Look, what thy memory cannot contain
Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
Those children nursed, deliver'd from thy brain,
To take a new acquaintance of thy mind."

With these sentences of Shakespeare, De Mornay, Augustine, and Erasmus, agree the words and sentiments of Dante, who had profoundly studied certain of the works of Augustine, setting in this as in many other things an example to our gentle Shakespeare :—

"It very greatly concerneth all men on whom a higher nature has impressed the love of truth, that *as they have been enriched by the labour of those before them, so they also should labour for those that are to come after them, to the end that posterity may receive from them an addition to its wealth*. For he is far astray from his duty—let him not doubt it—who, having been trained in the lessons of public business, cares not himself to contribute aught to the public good. He is no 'tree planted by the water-side that bringeth forth his fruit in due season.' *He is rather the devouring whirlpool ever engulfing but restoring nothing*."

With these, the words with which Dante begins his luminous and instructive treatise, 'De Monarchia,' let the words of Shakespeare's 1st sonnet be thoughtfully compared. The remarkable resemblance of the sentiments and phraseology cannot be disputed, and it is exceedingly suggestive. For the resemblance seems to pass into identity when into the comparison we take the other sonnets of the introductory sub-poem, and more particularly Sonnet xi.

In the composition, shaping,

¹ Augustine on Psalm i.

² Ibid., Psalm ciii.

³ Ibid., Psalm lxviii.

⁴ With this compare the words of Sonnet xii. :—

"And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence,
Save *breed*, to brave him when he takes thee hence."

⁵ The Trewness of the Christian Religion, written in French by Philip Mornay, Lord of Plessie Marlie. Begun, to be translated into English by Sir Philip Sidney, and at his request finished by Arthur Golding. Ed. 1592. From one of De Mornay's books—'Meditations on Life and Death'—Shakespeare derived the "Seven Ages," as he has described them in 'As You Like It.' In this description he also drew from one of Fenton's "Gc'den Epistles," and from the "Praise of Folly" by Erasmus.

⁶ Dante, De Monarchia.

and framing of the complex idea figured in the 20th sonnet, Shakespeare imitated or copied the example set to him in several places by Dante. Into that picture or figure he gathered all the ideas essential to his poem, and in it expounded, elaborated, or developed. A careful analysis of that composite figure shows to us—

1. The perfection of womanly grace in the general aspect and feature;
2. The combinations of manly excellence with womanly grace, or the union of such properties and qualities as make the figure a kind of *Androgina*;¹
3. The gentleness of woman's heart without the fickleness characteristic of "false women";
4. The brightness of the eye, surpassing that of theirs, without any falseness or deceptiveness in its movements—

"An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling;"

5. Properties and virtues like those of the morning sun—that is, heavenly and transforming powers,

"Gilding the object whereupon he gazeth;"

6. The hue, colour, or "appearance as of the likeness of a man"—

"A man in hue, all *hæes* in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes, and women's souls amazeth;"

that is, the source, measures, and criterion of beauty, equally attractive and impressive, uniting in itself grace and majesty, so as to beget love and reverence or solemn awe. These are the complex qualities, attributes, or properties with which Shakespeare invests the form of eternal love, which is the poetical or figured invention or device on which all the sonnets depend.

"You may ask me here what is this true love whose pleasant so throws the world into passions: whereunto the philosophers shall answer for me, who, in a deep insight, thinking to attain to the understanding of nature, imagined love to be a most excellent form or plot, exceeding generally the considerations of man, and therefore did figure unto us an *Androgina*, in whom they meant a man composed of masculine and feminine sex. But it is the most manifest that by this unities of the two halves is not meant the conjunction of bodies, but *the communion of minds* ('the marriage of true minds'): because this superficial form of body which we see in ourselves is not the man of whom we speak, but an organ of the man which we cover in ourselves, like as we note even from the beginning of the world, that God hath formed us to His own likeness, as always invisible and divided from corporal mass, until the time when He is to accomplish His promises. If Plato were the first that preferred this opinion of 'Androgina, as I am not resolute that he meant not only *the conjunction of minds*, so I dare fully assure myself that he figured such a miracle to represent unto us some heavenly matter in love."

This strange figure represents a complex personality, in which external, internal, and eternal grace, beauty, truth, virtue, power, and glory have their dwelling as in a body fitted and prepared for them. From what is said in the latter part of the sonnet it appears to have been the poet's intention at an earlier time to have used for his poetic purposes the figure of a woman such as Stella, Urania, Delia, Laura, or Beatrice; but that, as the result of his progressive experience, intelligence, and skill, he was led to adopt, as the best means for the expression of his thought, the composite figure in which the form as

¹ Fenton's Monophylo.

² See Sonnet xxxiii.

³ Monophylo, by Sir Geoffraie Fenton. 1572.

of a man gathers into itself all manly and womanly excellence—all perfection, human and divine. This addition to his original plan was made without any change in his purpose. In this part of the sonnet he also indicates the two-fold end or use for which he designed all his Sonnets—namely, first, his own spiritual discipline and improvement, "Mine be thy love";¹ and secondly, the good of those into whose hands the Sonnets might come, "and thy love's use their treasure."² The grand aim or purpose of the whole is the commendation, praise, and glory of the "immortal beauty,"—the goodness of the King eternal, immortal, invisible—the only wise God; but subordinate to this, and inseparable from it, the purpose of Shakespeare in these Sonnets was to promote the kingdom of God,—righteousness, peace, and joy,—in his own soul, and in the souls of his fellow-men. Let the 20th sonnet now be read and studied. It is the figured form of "the master-mistress" of Shakespeare's "passion":

"A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,

Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue, all 'hues' in his controlling,

Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.

And for a woman wert thou first created;

Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,

And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing, to my purpose nothing.

But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,

Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure."

Hints and suggestions for the composition of this complex figure seem to have been received by Shakespeare from Dante. The form of youthful beauty taken from Dante's "Vita Nuova" is set in this figure, or is included in it. The eyes and features of Beatrice are here. And here we find pictured in the words, "A man in hue, all hues in his controlling," what answers to that which Dante describes as "That which is supreme in knowledge and in love."³ Here, too, in the words "Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth," we find what corresponds with much in Dante, more particularly with the words in the 3d and 4th of the five sonnets which, taken collectively, served as the model according to which Shakespeare framed the structure and adjusted and distributed the parts of his sonnetic poem:—

¹ "For my own private consolation, I have collected certain devout sentences in a little book, which I had a mind to lay up in my heart."—Introduction to 'The Soliloquy of the Soul'—a little book not much known, by Thomas à Kempis.

² "In treasure this, thy profit is,
Thou shalt perceive it well.
Treasure it hight, the name is right,
If well thou do it read.
It will procure the authors sure,
To have great thanks for meede."

—A. R., in prayse of the book of 'The Tresurie of Amadis de Gaul,' translated by Thomas Hacket, 1600. Note also Dante's definition of philosophy—"Filosofia è amoroso uso di sapienza."—Il Convito, Tratt. iv. cap. 2. See also the whole of Tratt. iii.

³ Paradiso, xxviii. 66.

"In the high heavens they for Madonna long.

Love says of her, 'Can aught of mortal clay
Be all so pure, all so divinely fair?'"

To the same effect are the following words in one of the "Canzoniere":

"This lady to describe all skill must fail;
For with such varied beauties she's adorned,
No mortal mind has power to stand their blaze,
So that our intellect can view her charms:

So gentle is she that with thought of her
I feel the soul tremble within the heart,
As if to sink before the grief

That in her presence constantly I show.
The brightness of her eyes inflicts such wounds,

That all who see may say:
Let me not view this piteous object here,

Who fixed remains as if a person dead,
Soliciting relief."

"From the fair palace of my lady's eyes
There beams a light so noble, that where'er

She shows herself, are seen such wonders rare

And high as awe men into mute surprise;

And from their rays upon my heart doth rain

Such fear, that I as with a palsy shake.
'Here will I come no more!' I say, but make

All my resolved vows, alas! in vain.
Still do I turn where I am still subdued,

Giving new courage to my fearful eyes,

That whilom shrank before a blaze so great.

I see her and they sink together glued,
And the desire that led my footsteps dies;

Then Love, do thou take order for my state."

These quotations must for the present suffice for the illustration of some of the statements of Shakespeare in this sonnet. The idea of the composite figure itself seems to have been suggested to his mind by "the mystic shape" or figure of the gryphon pictured by the bold though sanctified imagination of Dante.¹

Although the idea of the composite figure called by Shakespeare "the master-mistress" of his passion may have been suggested to his mind by such places as those referred to, yet there is one other and that the highest and almost too daring effort of the poetic genius of Dante—the figured vision or description of the Three in One and the One in Three, with which Dante's great poem concludes, which may have prompted the modest yet venturesome genius of Shakespeare to give, in the 20th sonnet, figured and embodied expression to the grand device of his poem.²

Shakespeare's great idea or poetic device figured in the 20th sonnet is not the same as that of Dante, but it bears to it a close affinity and resemblance. It is no "painted beauty" that stirs his great verse.³ It partakes of what

¹ See the whole poem in the *Vita Nuova*, translated by Sir Theodore Martin.

² *Canzoniere* Di Dante, translated by Charles Lyell. Canzone xv.

³ *Canzoniere*, translated by Sir Theodore Martin, in notes and illustrations added to the *Vita Nuova*. See also Lyell's rendering.

⁴ See the places in the *Purgatorio*, xxix. 102-118; xxxi. 75-78; xxxi. 118-133; xxxii. 41-50; xxxii. 88-95. What Dante calls "Gryphon" is by Erasmus called "Geryon": "Nascitur admirandus ille Geryon, triplicis substantiæ gigas."—Erasmus, *De Matrimonio Christiano*, 1526.

⁵ See the *Paradiso*, xxxiii. 107-122.

⁶ In Sonnet xxi., the first of the group expository of his method, Shakespeare contrasts his theme with that of Spenser in some of his "Amoretti." See Spenser's "Amoretti" Sonnets, ix. xv. xxvi. lv. lxiv.

is heavenly and divine, and, at the same time, of what is earthly and human.

"Believe me, my love is as fair
As any mother's child, though not so
bright
As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's
air."

—Sonnet xxi.

With the youth and beauty and life figured in "the master-mistress" of his passion his whole being is identified. For to that glorious one—the immortal beauty—his soul is espoused for ever.

"Presume not on thy heart when mine
is slain :
Thou gavest me thine not to give back
again."

—Sonnet xxii.

The love with which he loves that one who is the spouse of his spirit is no ordinary affection, although it is not expressed and sealed according to the ceremonial usages of love in its betrothal and espousals. "O, let my books"—my sonnets and my thoughts—

"O, let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking
breast,
Who plead for love and look for recompense
More than that tongue that more hath
more express'd.
O learn to read what silent love hath
writ :
To hear with eyes belongs to love's
fine wit."

—Sonnet xxiii.

To prevent, if that were possible, the misapprehension of his mean-

ing by readers and interpreters, and to guide them to the right understanding of the poetic figures and language used by him, and more particularly to enable the thoughtful student to interpret the meaning and purpose of the complex figure in the 20th sonnet, Shakespeare, in the 24th, puts a clue into the reader's hand. For in that sonnet he tells us, in terms the most direct and explicit, that he uses figured phraseology for the expression of his love and of his sentiments. He tells us, without giving the number of the sonnet as the 20th, that in it he has given a pictorially figured representation of that love which has its seat in his heart on earth through the union of that heart to Him who is his only and well-beloved in heaven. In other words, Shakespeare tells us that in his Sonnets he uses allegorical or allusive forms of language for the expression of his feelings, ideas, and sentiments :—

"Mine eye hath play'd the painter and
hath steel'd
Thy beauty's form in table of my
heart ;
My body is the frame wherein 'tis
held,
And perspective it is best painter's
art.
For through the painter must you see
his skill,
To find where your true image pictured
lies ;
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging
still,
That hath his windows glazed with
thine eyes.

¹ A very significant interpretation of the concluding words of this sonnet is found in one of Bishop Jewell's sermons, "*Now touching an allegory*—that is to say, a secret and mystical kind of utterance.—God opened His mind sometimes not by words, but by some notable kind of deed ; and the people heard God speak unto them, not with their ears, but with their eyes." This sentence occurs in the first of 'Certaine Sermons preached before the Queenes Majestie and at Paules Crosse, by the reverend father John Jewell, late Bishop of Salisbury. Imprinted at London, 1588.' In this little volume the skilful reader may find the key to "A Lover's Complaint."

Now see what good turn eyes for eyes
 hath done :
 Mine eyes hath drawn thy shape, and
 thine for me
 Are windows to my breast, where-
 through the sun
 Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;
 Yet eyes this cunning want to grace
 their art ;
 They draw but what they see, know
 not the heart."

If the critics have failed to note and apprehend the meaning of Shakespeare in the Sonnets, this failure on their part cannot be said to have been caused by any want of pains on the part of Shakespeare to give to his readers, in what may be called the expository group of Sonnets—xxi.-xxiv., such hints, suggestions, instructions, and helps as might be entitled, "Notes by William Shakespeare, intended for the guidance of those who would know and understand the meaning of his Sonnets."

Having thus far indicated the remarkable resemblance of the method of Shakespeare in the Sonnets to the method according to which Dante develops some of his great ideas, we do not think it necessary to add much to this part of our argument by a comparison of the method of Shakespeare in the composition of the Sonnets directly addressed to "the mistress" of his "passion," with the method of Dante in the "*Vita Nuova*," the "*Commedia*," the "*Convito*," and certain of his *Canzoniere* or minor poems. The idea of a poetic mistress was in the air of England and Europe generally in the time of Shakespeare. It was the poetic fashion of that age. That was also the age when allegorical or allusive poetry attained to, and perhaps exceeded, its perfection; for the English mind,

expressing itself in poetic numbers or verse, put forth its greatest and really last effort in this form of poetic production in the "*Faery Queen*" of Spenser—that marvellous monument of continuous and sustained power, exercised within allegorical limitations, restraints, and laws. It was reserved for John Bunyan to produce in the latter part of the seventeenth century two allegorical poems in prose, concerning which a brilliant if not always exact critic¹ has said that the one—"*The Holy War*"—would have been the most interesting of all allegories if the other—"*The Pilgrim's Progress*"—had not been written. The Sonnet, as distinct from the more continuous form of writing known as allegorical poetry, may also be said to have attained to its perfection, and to have entered on its declination or downward career, in the Elizabethan period of English literature. Within that period we may fairly include the Sonnets of Shakespeare, although they were not published till 1609. For the name of Elizabeth, or of any other monarch associated with an era in literature, does not indicate that the period so designated takes end with the decease of the illustrious personage whose name is affixed to it, as a distinctive and expressive symbol. To the rage for sonnetting, so prevalent in his time, Shakespeare makes frequent reference in his plays. Every poetic dabbler or rhymers thought it necessary, as an indication of his poetic genius and faculty, to emulate the excellence of the Earl of Surrey, of Sir Philip Sidney, and of Edmund Spenser in the art of sonnetic composition. Amidst the huge mass of this kind of poetry now accumu-

¹ Lord Macaulay in his biographical sketch of John Bunyan. "*Biographies by Lord Macaulay*." Edinburgh: 1860.

lated, and accessible only in national or in very select private libraries, there are, no doubt, gems of exquisite beauty and priceless worth. While this is so, it cannot be denied that the sonnetic *furor* of the time gave just occasion for the ridicule in which Shakespeare indulges against the sonneteers.

"The man hath no wit that cannot, from the rising of the lark to the lodging of the lamb, vary deserved praise on my palfrey : it is a theme as fluent as the sea : turn the sands into eloquent tongues, and my horse is argument for them all : 'tis a subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for a sovereign's sovereign to ride on ; and for the world (familiar to us, and unknown) to lay apart their particular functions, and wonder at him. I once writ a sonnet in his praise, and began thus : 'Wonder of nature,' " So spoke the Dauphin, and to him Orleans remarked—"I have heard a sonnet begin so to one's mistress." Then said the Dauphin—"Then did they imitate that which I composed to my courser ; for my horse is my mistress." ¹ As well might the critics say that Shakespeare's horse, "the beast" of which he speaks in the 50th sonnet, ² was his "mistress," as attempt to identify that mistress with any form compounded of flesh and blood. And if the gentle genius of English poetry could break silence and address his words to the director and the society of the critics of the muckworm order, who are making laborious and diligent search in all filthy places for Shakespeare's unspotted and fair mistress, he might, using the words of Touchstone to

Audrey, say—"I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths ;" and he might also say that—"When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child Understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room."

The "honesty" of Shakespeare, though expressed in "the truest poetry which is the most feigning," has been handed round at the critic's banquet in dishes the most unclean, by those who, in giving praise for their foulness, do not, like Audrey, need to wait for the "sluttishness that may come hereafter." Well might England's poetic genius exclaim, "Truly I would that the critics had been made poetical !" For so far are they from being "poetical," that they do not even know what "poetical" is—whether it is "honest in deed and in word"; whether it is "a true thing," or a thing most feigned, false, and foul. Shakespeare's horse was not "the master-mistress" of his passion ; and it is about as absurd and unpoetical to say that Lord Herbert or Lord Southampton was the "master" of that passion, as to say that the poet's "mistress" was, as in the Dauphin's case, the poet's horse. It is time that this "gross-witted" and most scandalous criticism, degrading alike to Shakespeare and to those who can extract such meanings from his pure utterances, should transfer its researches to a field where garbage is more likely to be picked up.

The idea of giving permanent

¹ Henry V., iii. 7. 33-47. In dictating the words of the Dauphin in praise of his "palfrey," Shakespeare seems to have had before him what Sir Philip Sidney says in the first paragraph of his 'Defence of Poesy.'

² See Sonnet 1.

³ See the whole scene in *As You Like It*, iii. 3.

expression to his religious sentiments in the poetic form of the sonnet, seems to have been first suggested to Shakespeare by the words and by the example of Sir Philip Sidney. In his "Defence of Poesy," Sir Philip, treating of "that lyrical kind of poetry" which consists of "songs and sonnets," says of it—

"Which, if the Lord gave us so good minds, how well it might be employed in singing the praises of the immortal beauty, the immortal goodness of that God, who giveth us hands to write and wits to conceive; of which we might well want words, but never matter; of which we could turn our eyes to nothing, but we should ever have new budding occasions."¹

In another part of the beautiful "Defence," Sidney says of one sweet singer that "he showed himself a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting beauty to be seen by the eyes of the mind only cleared by faith." In another place in the same "Defence," he says that short of this "we miss the right use of the material point of poesy."² Sidney's own example, in the Stella Sonnets and in other songs, was the comment which he gave of his theoretical principles. It is Philisides, the beautiful, courteous, and brave Sir Philip Sidney, who says of himself, when repeating his own song among the shepherds, beginning with the words—

"As I my little flock on Ister bank
Did piping lead,"—

that he had learned it before he

had ever subjected his thoughts to acknowledge any master, but only a "mistress." Proceeding with his poetic tale, he says:—

"The song I sang old Lanquet had me taught,
Lanquet the shepherd best swift Ister knew.
For clerkly read, and hating what is naught,
For faithful heart, clean hands, and mouth as true:
With his sweet skill my skillless youth he drew,
To have a feeling taste of him that sits
Beyond the heaven, far more beyond your wits.
He said the music best thilk powers pleased,
Was jump concord between our wit and will;
Where highest notes to godliness are raised,
And lowest sink not down to jot of ill:
With old true tales he wont mine ears to fill,
How shepherds did of yore, how now they thrive,
Spoiling their flock, or while 'twixt them they strive."³

Shakespeare, as if stirred by the words and by the example of the generous and noble Sir Philip Sidney, chose for himself a poetic mistress whom he in effect thus addressed:—

"Madam, amongst so many eloquent wits, albeit I justly esteem myself inferior even to the worst, as standing also less in the favour of nature than they, yet (with the bee that yields honey for his house-rent) I must confess that if ever any fruit went out of this little garden of mine, you only have planted it; and as others aspire to kings and princes, for whose

¹ "Defence of Poesy," Sir Philip Sidney's Works, vol. iii. p. 189, ed. 1739.

² Ibid., p. 148.

³ Ibid., p. 190.
⁴ Arcadia, Book iii. fol. 198, ed. 1593. In the first or quarto edition, 1590, this song is given in Book i. fol. 90-93. Sidney's tribute to Lanquet is equalled only by that of De Mornay to the memory of the same excellent and sagacious man. See Prefatory Note by De Mornay to his Latin edition of 'The Trueness of the Christian Religion,' 1583.

delight they set a-work their wits, so I beseech you let it be lawful for me to name you the star by whose aspect I am led to every well-doing; protesting (for my part) to hold such a guide in no less value and honour than in times past the Muses upon whom the poets bestowed such solemn and devout invocations; you only, madam, do I invoke—yea, you alone are the element wherein I live, and the oracle of all my plots and purposes, wherein I dare pretend no other benefit of you, than that which even yourself is able to promise in me."¹

Thus in effect did Shakespeare address the heavenly love which was to him the star that guided all his movements in his new life—"whatsoever star that guides my moving" (Sonnet xxvi.)—and was to him the muse which in the 33th sonnet he invokes.

This same love, in the form of eternal wisdom, is that of which in Sonnet lxxviii. he says—

"Thou art all my art, and dost advance
As high as learning my rude ignorance."

He began his meditations on the heavenly beauty and love by using, after Sidney's example, the anonymous figured form of the mistress; but as his argument and invention grew and developed, he gave prominence to the form of the "master" (Dominus, Magister), rather, than, to the figure of the "mistress" (Domina, Magistra). The addition of the master's figure to the figure of the mistress became indispensable from the time when the poet-

ical device or invention of which all the sonnets are expository, and to which they are all subordinated and subservient, was fully conceived, and took perfect form in his mind. Till that time the anonymous figure of the mistress was sufficient for his poetic ideas and purpose. His study of Dante and of Augustine, without inducing him to dispense with the idea of the mistress, led him to adopt as his device the truly grand idea pictured in the 20th sonnet, in which the eternal love takes to itself not so much the form of a man, as the form, fashion, aspect, hue, and likeness of human nature. For what is there presented is one complex personality, in which divine perfections blend themselves and intermingle with human attributes, qualities, and properties.² In the handmaid series, we have what answers to Beatrice under certain very specific aspects as she is extolled by Dante. She was the glorious lady of Dante's mind—"la gloriosa donna della mia mente";³ but she stood to him in a great variety of "feigned" or "poetical" relations. She was as mother and as mistress to him. She was the object of his ardent admiration, desire, and love. And as a mother and mistress, she exercised over him a fascinating and a most imperious sway. He first saw her when he was nearing the end of his ninth year, and when she was beginning her ninth year. She was then a child appearing to

¹ Monophylo, by Sir Geoffraie Fenton; the second book, fol. 2. 1572.

² This is a very different view of this sonnet from that given by Dr. Charles Mackay, who, in attempting to unravel "a Tangled Skein," adds by his literary force to the previous entanglement, saying that this sonnet—the 20th—is "both epicene and obscene"!

³ Second paragraph of the "Vita Nuova." In another place Dante says that the "Lady" of whom he *always* speaks is the same—that is, Philosophy—as consisting of love the informing soul, and wisdom the animated body. This was his first, his second, his only love. See the whole of Tratto Terzo of the "Convito," and more particularly the eleventh and twelfth chapters.

a child. Her next and most notable appearance to Dante, as recorded by him in the "*Vita Nuova*," was when he was near the end of his eighteenth year. The impression on childhood by the perception of the heavenly beauty, is that which is signified by the first vision of Beatrice; the impression on youthful manhood made by the sight of the heavenly beauty, is that which is signified by the second recorded appearance or vision of Beatrice, — *vestra beatitudo*. The difference between the ages of Beatrice and Dante is accounted for thus: Dante reckons his life from the time when it began in the womb; but till he was born, although he was an existent being, he was part of another, and was in that other included. His individual or separate life as a conscious being dated from his birth. And reckoning his years of conscious existence from his birth, the date of his first vision of the chief good—the heavenly and immortal beauty—was about the commencement of his ninth year.¹ Then began his "new life." In his eighteenth year that new life received a new impulse or awakening. At that time he was conscious of an inward and very notable revival. But through his devotion to literature, to politics, and to objects in themselves lawful and worthy of a patriotic man, his spiritual life had all but died out. Beatrice had died, and he was left desolate and sorrowful. The death of Beatrice is the almost entire extinction in his soul of the "new life," of which

he was for the first time conscious in his ninth year. How long he continued in this spiritually benumbed or all but dead condition, we know not. But the "*Vita Nuova*" shows that he remembered the first love which he had foolishly and sinfully left. This remembrance was accompanied by unfeigned repentance, expressing itself in the exercises of confession, contrition, and godly resolution. Of these remembrances, exercises of penitence, and holy resolution, the "*Vita Nuova*" is the permanent memorial and expression. They are Dante's version of grace abounding to him, showing how he, notwithstanding his relapse, was so restored and invigorated that he became what, "not without right," he called himself, "The singer of rectitude." In accordance with all this is the statement with which he begins the first canto of the "*Divina Commedia*," in which he tells us that, in middle age (say in his thirty-fifth year), when he was all but inextricably involved in the pleasures, ambitions, and commercial competitions of the world—like a traveller benighted in a pathless forest, where the leopard, the lion, and the wolf threatened to devour him which way soever he might move—Beatrice interposed for his help. Going down to the Inferno for the great poet Virgil, she entreated that poet to show to her favoured Florentine the realms of darkness and the abodes of woe; and after conducting him through those dismal regions of despair, to

¹ Luther measures his life much in the same way as this. Beatrice is from first to last in Dante's poetry the symbol of his experience in the new life. That new experience began in his ninth year—reckoning his years from the time of his birth, as distinguished from the time when he was conceived in his mother's womb. This distinction is not fanciful or far-fetched, but can readily be supported by passages from sixteenth-century writers. See Albion's England, chap. xxvii., first penned and published by William Warner—1597.

lead him up towards Paradise, through the fires that purify the soul while consuming its "sinful earth," and along the ascending way, in which, the loftier the ascent the more lowly becomes the spirit of the aspiring traveller. In keeping with all this, and with much more detailed in what is really Dante's spiritual autobiography, are the words of Beatrice addressed to him when she is about to bestow on him very signal and much desired tokens of her favour and love. Of all this we have the record in the 30th canto of the "Purgatorio," quoted by us in our former essay.¹

Shakespeare, in addressing his mistress, had no such tale as that of Dante to rehearse. It was not till he had entered into the autumn season of his life, towards the end of his thirty-third or the commencement of his thirty-fourth year, that his Beatrice (*beautitudo*) appeared to him.² And when, for the first time, he beheld her, she wore an aspect of sadness, and was clothed with the weeds of sorrowfulness and mourning (Sonnet cxxvi.)

He had passed through the spring and the summer time of his natural life, and had entered into the autumn of the same, before the

vision of heavenly beauty and eternal love gave to him "unlooked-for joy" (Sonnet xxv.)³ Of this we have a piteously plaintive record in two retrospective Sonnets—xvii., xviii. And the same bewailed fact is implied in Sonnet cxxxviii. — a sonnet which has, like many of the others, greatly perplexed and puzzled the gross-witted criticism.

The meaning of this sonnet is so simple and plain that a little child may apprehend it. In it the truth or fact confessed is that Shakespeare, when he wrote it (probably in 1597 or early in 1598), was old in years—felt himself so to be—but was young in grace. He was old in the old life; he was young, and but a babe or novice, in the new life. This is the explanation of this sonnet: and hence it is that he speaks of his "pen" as "my pupil pen" (Sonnet xvi.); and of his new "love" as "a babe."

"Love is a babe; then might I not say
so,
To give full growth to that which still
doth grow."

—Sonnet cxv.

It would be easy to add to the instances given from Dante in illustration of the very marked resemblance between his poetic

¹ See Blackwood's Magazine for June 1884, p. 737.

² In the two retrospective sonnets, xvii., xviii., in which he confesses and bewails the lateness of the period in his life in which he first became conscious of the heavenly love, he distributes his life into four ages or periods, answering to the four seasons; infancy or childhood—the spring; youthful manhood—the summer; manhood in maturity—autumn; old age—winter. This is the Pythagorean partition of the ages of the life of man. "L'âge viril à l'autonne, pour ce qu'en ce temps l'homme a l'expérience, est meur et de bon conseil, avec connoissance certaine de toutes choses." See a book accessible to Shakespeare, and probably studied by him: 'Les Diverses Leçons de Pierre Messie, Gentilhomme de Seville, mises en Francoys par Claude Gruet, Parisien. A Paris, 1554.' The "seven ages" are also found in the same chapter of this book, Part I. chap. xl.

³ Dante's new life began in his ninth year. In his eighteenth year it was much quickened. After this followed a time of declension, till the restoration and revival noted at the commencement of the "Commedia." Shakespeare's "new life" did not begin till some time after the death of his only son Hamnet, in August 1596.

method and that of Shakespeare in the sonnets ; but for the present and in connection with the argument founded on resemblance, we shall let the following instances, out of many, suffice for the purpose in view :—

In one of the sonnets of the “Vita Nuova” Dante says—

“And then I saw Love coming from afar,
Yet hardly knew him, all so blithe his mien.

‘Now do we honour meet!’ did he exclaim ;
And smiles were clustered round his every word :

Some little space I stood beside my lord,

When, looking towards the quarter whence he came,

I saw the Lady Vanna, side by side
With Lady Bice—each a miracle—

To where we stood advancing smilingly.
Then Love to me, as I stood wondering, cried,

‘This Maid is Spring’—his words I recollect—

‘That Love is called, she so resembles me.’”

Let the interpreters explain what Dante means by calling Vanna, Spring, and what by calling Bice, or Beatrice, Love. Is not the spring, *primavera*—the bloom of life—beauty’s rose? And is not Beatrice that which excited Dante’s first love, and that which, when it was ready to die, revived and strengthened it? Beatrice was in this respect another name for Dante’s love to the chief good ; at the same time Beatrice was the symbol of the Eternal Love to Dante. By this love—that is, by Beatrice—Dante was made love’s captive and slave in his early youth, and by her he was reclaimed after he had for a time forsaken and departed from his first love, and by her he was enabled to be faithful unto death.

“Tell her,—Madonna,—with a faith so fast

His heart to yours is wrought,
That all his thoughts are bent on serving you :

Yours early ; yours he shall be to the last.”

Commenting on the sonnet in which Vanna and Bice appeared to him beside Love, Dante says—

“Here now might one who is worthy to have all his doubts resolved be inclined to pause and make question as to the way in which I speak of Love, as if he were a thing subsisting by himself, and not merely an intelligent but a corporal substance, which proposition in strict truth is false. For love is not, so to speak, an independent substance, but is an accident in substance. Yet that I speak of him as though he were a body—yea, as though he were a man—appears by three things which I say of him. I say that I saw him coming from afar : wherefore as to come expresses change of place (and body alone, according to the philosopher, has the power to pass from place to place), it is plain that I assume love to be corporeal. Again, I say that he smiled, and also that he spoke,—things which are both, and especially the power to smile, peculiarly the attributes of man, and therefore it is clear that I assume him to be human.”

In the same comment, treating of the lady of whom he had before written, he says that,

“As she passed along the street, people ran to catch a sight of her—a circumstance which gave me wonderful delight ; and when she drew near to any one, a feeling of reverence so profound came over his heart, that he had no courage either to raise his eyes or return her salute ; and of this many who have felt it could bear witness to such as doubt. But she, crowned with humility, pursued her way, testifying no triumph in what she saw and heard. Many, as she went by, exclaimed, ‘This is not a woman, but one of the fairest of heaven’s angels!’ Others ‘Behold a miracle ! Blessed be the Lord, in that He hath wrought so marvelously !’ I say, her demeanour was so

full of grace and dignity, and every charm, that, looking upon her, men felt within them an emotion of inexpressible sweetness and elevation: nor was it possible for any one to look upon her but straightway a sigh rose from his breast. These, and even more marvellous effects, were wrought by her in a manner at once most strange and admirable; much meditating whereon, and wishing to resume my verses in her praise I determined to express in words something of her wondrous and excelling influence, in order not only that those who had beheld her in the flesh, but others, ought to know what of her fair perfections might be conveyed in words. Thereupon I composed this sonnet:—

"So kind and full of gentle courtesy
My lady's greeting is, that every tongue
To silence thrills; and eyes, that on her hung
With mute observance, dare no more
to see.
Onward she moves, clothed with humility,
Hearing with look benign her praises rung;
A being, seeming sent from heaven among
Mankind, to show what heavenly women be."

In keeping with this is what is said in an earlier sonnet:—

"All gentleness, all thoughts serene
and meek,
Grown in the heart of him that hears
her voice.
To see her once is ever to rejoice:
Her look, when a faint smile is on her cheek,
Nor tongue can tell, nor memory hold
in view,
So winning gracious is the sight and new."

"She ennobles whatever she looks upon, ('gilding the object whereupon it gazeth')—which is as much as to say that she kindles love into being, where before he was not. She quickens love into action in the hearts of all those on whom she looks. When I say all gentleness, repeating what I had said previously, I have regard to two actions of her mouth, one of

which is its most sweet utterance, and the other its wondrous smile. Mark, however, that I do not say of this last *how it works within the hearts of others*, seeing that the memory can neither retain her smile nor its effects."

With this compare the words of Shakespeare in Sonnet cxxxi:—

"Yet, in good faith some say that thee behold,
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan:
To say they err I dare not be so bold,
Although I swear it to myself alone.
And, to be sure that is not false I swear
A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face,
On one another's neck do witness bear
Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.
In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds."

The blackness here spoken of is the reproach cast on the poet's mistress by those who, professing to admire and love her beauty, or her principles, dislike the precepts and example by which she insisted on the humbling of the pride of all those admitted into fellowship with her. It is the tyranny of meekness or humility which must have all its true lovers or admirers be lowly as itself. The "deeds" are like those of the "Black Knight" in the 'Arcadia,' black only to the enemies of his mistress—black and deadly to all that is other than pure and virtuous, meek and lowly in heart. In this sense, in this place, the poet's mistress is both black and tyrannous:—

"Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art.
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;
For well thou know'st, to my dear-doting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel."

Her tyranny is love's imperial

sway : her blackness is the enemy's
"slander" :—

"Within her looks such stores of pleasure lie,
That through the gazer's eye, creeps to his heart
A sweetness must be tasted to be known ;
And fear his lips with love in every tone,
A spirit soft and gentle seems to part,
Which to the soul keeps saying—'Sigh! oh sigh!'"

Developing this sentiment, Dante proceeds, saying—

"In all she does such gentle grace there is,
No one can think of her but at he thought
He breathes a sigh with love's own sweetness fraught.

"Reflecting on what I had said, it seemed to be as if I had spoken of my lady imperfectly. I therefore resolved to write something in which I should express how I seemed to be disposed towards her influence, and how it acted upon me, and accordingly began this sonnet :—

"So long has Love enchained me as his thrall,
And so accustomed to his empire,
That tyrannous as at first he seemed to me,
Now on my heart his rigours sweetly fall.

So when by him my better parts were all
Thrown down, and seems as every power would flee,

Even then, so great my soul's sweet ecstasy,

My trembling cheeks grow pale as funeral pall.

Then love within me gathers might apace,

Making my sighs in words proclaim their woe,

And calling on my lady, forth they go,
Entreating her to take me to her grace:

Thus still it chanceth when she looks on me,

And none might deem how humbled then I be."

Quomodo sedet sola civitis pleni populo! facta est quasi vidua gentium. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! She is become as a widow, she that was great among the nations." —(Lamentations i. 1.) These words are cited as a kind of prelude to the new matter which follows:—

"The eyes that mourn in pity of the heart,
Such pain have suffered from their ceaseless tears,
That they are utterly subdued at last ;
Yes, Beatrice is gone to yonder heaven,
To realms where angels dwell and are in peace.

Forth from the lovely habitation, where,
Supreme in grace it dwelt, her soul is gone,

And in a worthy place shines starry-bright.

He who can speak of her, nor weep, doth bear

Within his breast a worthless heart of stone,

Where no benignant influence e'er can light

The grovelling heart, could never gain such height,

As to imagine aught of her, and so
It ne'er is moved by the desire to weep,

But sadness him assails and yearning deep,

In sighs and burning tears to vent his woe,

And o'er his soul a black despair doth creep,

Who hath, yea even in thought, at any time

Seen what she was, and how we lost her in her prime."

From the scenes and songs of sorrow connected with what is denoted by the death of Beatrice, let us rise with Dante to the contemplation of the scenes of starry brightness, and listen with him to the songs of joy that are sung there:—

¹ Vita Nuova.

"O genuine glitter of eternal Beam !
 With what a sudden whiteness did it
 flow,
 O'erpowering vision in me. But so fair,
 So passing lovely, Beatrice showed,
 Mind cannot follow it, nor words express
 Her infinite sweetness. Thence mine
 eyes regained
 Power to look up; and I beheld myself
 Sole with my lady, to more lofty bliss
 Translated; for the star, with warmer
 smile
 Impurpled, well denoted our ascent.
 Here memory mocks the toil of genius.
 Christ
 Beamed on that cross; and patterns
 fail me now.
 But whoso takes his cross and follows
 Christ,
 Will pardon me for that I leave untold,
 When in the fleckered dawning he
 shall spy
 The glitterance of Christ. From horn
 to horn,
 And 'tween the summit and the base,
 did move
 Lights scintillating as they met and
 passed.
 Thus oft are seen with ever-changeful
 glance,
 Straight or athwart, now rapid, and
 now slow,
 The atomies of bodies, long or short,
 To move along the sunbeam, whose
 slant line
 Checkers the shadow interposed by art
 Against the noontide heat. And at
 the chime
 Of minstrel music, dulcimer, and harp
 With many strings, a pleasant dining
 makes
 To him who heareth not distinct the
 note:
 So from the lights, which there ap-
 peared to me,
 Gathered along the cross a melody
 That, indistinctly heard, with ravish-
 ment
 Possessed me. Yet I marked a hymn
 Of lofty praises, for there came to me
 'Arise,' and 'Conquer,' as to one who
 hears
 And comprehends not. Me sick ecstasy
 O'ercame, that never, till that hour,
 was thing
 That held me in so sweet imprisonment.

"Perhaps my saying over bold ap-
 pears,
 Accounting less the pleasure of those
 eyes
 Whereon to look fulfilleth all desire.
 But he who is aware those living seals
 Of every beauty work in quicker force
 The higher they are risen, and that there
 I had not turned me to them—he may
 well
 Excuse me that whereof in my excuse
 I do accuse me, and may own my truth,
 That holy pleasure here not yet revealed
 Which grows in transport as we higher
 rise."¹

This vision of the brightness and
 the blessedness of Paradise is fol-
 lowed by words expressive of the
 contrast between "true love and
 loose appetite":—

"True love, that ever shows itself as
 clear
 In kindness, as loose appetite in wrong,
 Silenced that lyre harmonious, and
 stilled
 The sacred chords, that are by heaven's
 right hand
 Unwound and tightened. How to
 righteous prayers
 Should they not hearken, who, to give
 me will
 For praying, in accordance thus were
 mute?
 He hath, in sooth, good cause for end-
 less grief,
 Who, for the love of thing that lasteth
 not,
 Despoils himself forever of that love."²
 "O animals of clay! O spirits gross!
 The primal will, that in itself is good,
 Hath from itself, the Chief Good, ne'er
 been moved.
 Justice consists in consonance with it,
 Derivable by no created good,
 Whose every cause depends upon its
 beam."³

With all this let the words and
 scenery of Sonnet cxxviii. be com-
 pared:—

"How oft, when thou, my music,
 music play'st,
 Upon that blessed wood whose motion
 sounds

¹ "The venerable sign, that quadrants on the round conjoining frame."

² Paradiso, xiv. 71-132.

³ Ibid., xv. 1-10.

⁴ Ibid., xix, 82-87.

*With thy sweet fingers, when thou
gently strayst
The wiry concord that mine ear con-
foundeth,*

Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should

that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blush-
ing stand !

To be so tickled, they would change
their state

And situation with those dancing chips,
*O'er whom thy fingers walk with gen-
tle gait*

*Making dead wood more blest than
living lips.*

Since saucy jacks so happy are in this
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips
to kiss."

The poetic method according to
which Shakespeare develops his
thought in this sonnet bears a very
notable resemblance to the method
of Dante.¹ No less marked and

striking is the resemblance in the
phraseology and figures of this
sonnet to phrases and figures in
Dante's description of the blessed-
ness, music, and joy of Paradise.
And it cannot be denied that the
contrast so powerfully expressed
in Sonnet cxxix. is after the man-
ner, and as we venture to say,
after the example of Dante. This
will be shown when we bring
forward our argument for the
identification of Dante as "the
other poet," founded on the identi-
ties of thought, figure, and phrase-
ology in Shakespeare's Sonnets
and in Dante's writing. The
probability established by the argu-
ment from resemblances will be-
come a certain and indisputable
position when supported and con-
firmed by the argument from
identities.

¹ In the poetic method, as distinguished from the figures and phraseology, respect must be had to the relation in which this sonnet stands to that by which it is preceded (cxxvii.), and to that by which it is followed (cxxxix.)

THE WATERS OF HERCULES.—PART XI.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—GAURA DRACULUI.

"Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand?"
—*Macbeth*.

GRETCHEN's first impulse was to exclaim in wonder, her second to recoil in fear. There was a mixture of beauty and horror about the spot, which put to nought every description she had heard of the place. All around, the moss and ferns wreathed in wasteful abundance. Up to the very edge of the horrible abyss did the ivy creep boldly; and not up to the edge only, but over it the green trails had ventured. There were clinging plants of all descriptions, contending with each other as to which of them should reach down the deepest to sound that gaping space below. They hung in a heavy fringe, down into the darkness, scarcely stirred by the breeze, nor even touched by the sunshine; and the lowest hanging leaves of these venturesome trails were pale for want of full light, as are all plants which have been grown in a cellar. Trails have hung down this way year by year, have budded in spring, and have dropped their leaves down into the gulf below them when autumn came round. Myriads of withered leaves must have fluttered down there, away from the light; but none have ever come back to tell the tale of what they had seen below.

The very beauty all around made the horror of the spot more palpable. The stately ferns waved here as peacefully as though they grew in some quiet dell; the ivy twined as soberly as though it clothed an old church tower; and the innocent flowerets peep over the edge. But

there is treason in them, one and all. They are the beautiful mask of a hideous thing; they are the smiling ornaments which have decked out this hidden trap. There is not one leaflet which trembles there, not one flowerlet which blooms, that does not deserve to be rooted out and left to wither. Stripped of its wreath of verdure, *Gaura Dracului* would also be stripped of half its peril. If that black hole were cut in the naked rock, and bared on all sides to view, it would be a frightful object, but it would no longer be the lurking danger which it now is. Nothing but a fiendish cunning, you might fancy, could have contrived to turn so much beauty to so cruel an account.

"A horrid yawning black hole," as Adalbert had said; and his words were strictly true. And yet not one of the four people now standing on the edge of the hole but did not feel conscious that each had carried within them a different picture to this. The picture in each mind would have as widely differed from the other in the painting of details, as each picture was different from the reality before them. It was not that it was less horrible, or less black, or less beautiful than they had imagined, but that it was horrible and beautiful in some inexplicably different way from that which they had expected.

Gretchen had known that the spot would be awful; but she had not thought that the awfulness would make itself felt in this sen-

sible, almost tangible manner. Against her own will she stepped back shuddering. The sense of immeasurable depth, the black vacancy, with the suggestion of a deeper blacker vacancy below, made her giddy. It was not difficult to understand why the peasants called the spot haunted, and invented legends as apologies for their fear. Standing beside it now in the gloom of twilight, Gretchen felt a shiver run over her. For centuries this hole had stood open: it was a necessity almost that one, or more than one, victim had fallen into its jaws. Each of the four persons who stood now in awed silence by the edge, instinctively conjured up visions of frightful tragedies. A traveller lost in the dark—how, when coming down the slope of that bank, could he avoid walking straight into the arms of death? One step would be enough now to send any of them headlong to destruction.

Kurt was the one who appeared the least impressed. He picked up a stone and flung it down. It flashed out of sight, bounded from rock to rock, fainter and always fainter; then came an interval of silence—it must have reached the bottom: no, a far, far-off sound told them that it was still falling. Not until now had they realised the awful depth. They threw another stone, and counted the time of its fall upon the second-hand of Mr Howard's watch. There was the same flash, the same bounds, the same horribly suggestive interval of silence, and then the distant rattling sound again. During half a minute an attentive ear could still catch the faint sound of a fall; and even then, when it died away they were left with the impression that it had not stopped falling, but was only too far off to be heard any longer.

"They say that it leads straight to hell, don't they?" said István, suddenly. He had not spoken since Gretchen's appearance on the spot; he was now standing close to the edge, gazing down the hole with a fixed and abstracted stare. "Strange that I should never have come across it before now!"

"And we were so near it that first day," said Gretchen, drawing back another step from the edge. "I do not see how we can have missed it!"

"That is because we took the turn to the left—the way the Bohemian has gone for water."

"And where does that lead?" asked Mr Howard.

"To the frontier: we are not half an hour from Roumania here."

The bushes rustled close to them, and the Bohemian appeared upon the scene, pale, dishevelled, and wellnigh breathless. In his left hand he held Gretchen's water-flask; with his right he beat his breast violently, while he stood struggling to recover his breath.

The mild face of this peacefully inclined man had never so nearly approached to passion as it did at this moment.

"*Heilige Maria!*" he gasped out—"Heilige Muttergottes of the *Wunderbaum* at Choteborschwitz! My vow! my sacred vow! I have not broken it. *Der liebe Herrgott* knows I am innocent!"

"Of course you are innocent," said Gretchen, laying her hand on the arm of the excited man. "We have found *Gaura Dracului*; but your vow is safe."

"No reason that I can see for such excitement," observed Kurt, composedly.

"I am thankful that we have not allowed that fellow's superstitious folly to baffle us," remarked Mr Howard, with satisfaction.

"How did you find it?" asked the Bohemian, wiping his forehead with an unsteady hand, while, still exhausted, he leant against a tree.

Gretchen explained to him the secret of the three crosses.

"Those three crosses! I have seen them often, Fräulein, when the tree was still upright. They have puzzled me too."

He drew a long breath; and then, partially recovering his composure, offered her the water-flask.

"You have waited long, Fräulein; your thirst must be terrible."

"The water!" said Gretchen, looking blankly at the flask.

"The water you sent me to fetch," the Bohemian repeated, holding the flask towards her.

"But Dr Komers?" she said; "did you not meet him? He went after you to tell you we had already found water. Mr Howard's flask was full."

"I did not meet the Herr Doctor. I came back to the tree-trunk, and when I saw the bundle still lying there, and you gone, I guessed you would be here,—I was was afraid of it."

"Komers will be waiting for us at the tree," decided Kurt—"depend upon it."

"Unless he has lost his way meantime," said Tolnay, with a grim laugh.

"Which would be a nasty job about here," added Mr Howard.

"Oh, I hope he will be careful!" cried Gretchen, drawing back another step from the abyss.

She saw a gleam of jealousy in Tolnay's eyes.

"That man is always careful," sneered István, just under his breath; "but even careful men can sometimes lose their way."

The Bohemian had by this time recovered himself to some extent, though he still leant against the tree-stem.

"Those three crosses!" he repeated, with a dissatisfied shake of the head. "If I had but known it! It always struck me that they were too well out to be done by a goat-herd. If I had but known what they meant!"

"And if you had known what they meant?"

"I should have destroyed them."

"Come!" cried Mr Howard, "this is growing preposterous. This fellow's obstinacy beats anything in my experience. What was all that rubbish he told us about the place? What is it that the Greek fellow down there swore on his club?"

"A victim every century," said the Bohemian, and the old scared expression came back to his face.

"Why, the man looks as if he had been down the hole himself, or chucked some one else over," said Mr Howard, eyeing him severely. "It can't be superstition alone that sets him shaking in his shoes this way."

"Superstition! *Heilige Jungfrau* of the *Wunderbaum* at Chotoborschwitz! we are not superstitious, we Bohemians, like the people of this strange country," sighed the man, with the resignation of an exile; "and neither have I ever seen any man or woman go down into that blackness. But—but——"

"But you have heard of such a thing happening?" finished Gretchen, bending an imperious glance upon him. "Tell us the story!"

"It is the story of my vow," he faltered.

"The story of your vow can do no more harm than is already done."

It was growing too dark to see clearly the expression of the Bohemian's face; but, from the pause which followed, and from the nervous motion of his hands as he

twisted up the cap between them, it was evident that he was going through a sharp tussle with his conscience. Finally, the desire to justify himself against the charge of superstition triumphed, and he spoke.

"Fräulein," he began in a tremulous voice, still leaning against the tree-stem beside him, "you will remember how I told you that both I and my father were born in this strange country, and that it was my grandfather who accepted the offer which the Government had made him, and left his nation to settle here. It was a rich farm which they gave him. He brought his young wife with him, and his only child was born here soon after he had settled down; and yet he should have rued the day when he came to this land. He had not been settled a year in the valley when a Wallachian who worked on his farm told him the story of *Gaura Dracului*, and of the treasure which the brigands had buried there, and which no one had found.

"My grandfather loved gold. The story inflamed his thirst for riches. For weeks he dreamt of nothing else; and at last he determined, in concert with the Wallachian labourer, to whom he promised half the gain, to sound the depth of the Devil's Hole.

"The two went up in secret—not even my grandmother knew the object of the expedition; and it was only next day, when the Wallachian came back alone, half mad with terror, and told her how the rope had broken in his hands, and his companion plunged into the abyss before his eyes,—it was only then that she heard of *Gaura Dracului*."

The Bohemian broke off, and crossed himself. No one spoke for a moment. Very swift, very

silent, very terrible must such a death have been.

"When I was ten years old," said the Bohemian, "my father took me up here to this place and showed it to me. He made me swear by my devoticon to the *Wunderbaum* at Choteborschwitz that I would never reveal the spot to anybody. It was his mother, my grandmother—I remember her still—who had told him the story."

"But," said Gretchen, after a moment of silence, "I cannot see what logical object your father had with that vow. The more the place is known, the less danger there would be of a person stumbling in."

"That may be, Fräulein, but I was bound to hold my vow. My father meant it for the best, no doubt. I have seldom come to the spot myself, and I never cut shingles in this part of the forest. I saw something happen here long ago when I was a child, which made me sad for many days. There were two young kids which had strayed near this place, and on that bank above they began to butt at each other in play. It was the prettiest sight you could see, and I laughed as I looked on; but I stopped laughing very soon. One of them made a false step; he had got his horns entangled with his playfellow's horns, and the two fell together down that hole. They went straight down; there was not a sound; it was all quiet in a moment."

"And I suppose that the devils had roast-kid for dinner that day," observed Kurt flippantly.

"We once carried a big stone here," went on the Bohemian, unperturbed—"I and some peasants who knew of the spot. It took six of us to carry it; and when we threw it down, the breath of air which came up knocked the caps off our six heads as if with a blow."

"I should have been mightily surprised if it had not," remarked Mr Howard; "and you took it for supernatural interference, of course."

"And another time," went on the Bohemian calmly, "we let a man down with ropes. We had fifty yards of rope, but it was not enough. Next day we came back with double as much rope; but when we had lost sight of the man, we heard him calling up, for he had taken fright; and after that we did not meddle with the place again."

"Bah!" said Mr Howard, "in ten years the measurement of the depth will be reduced to a mathematical calculation."

"That is what papa says," observed Gretchen; "and he believes, too, that there is some outlet below."

"That is the secret of the mountains, Fräulein; and the mountains do not chatter. According to the story of the brigands' treasure, some such passage would need to exist. I know of one story only which seems to confirm it. My father was told by an old peasant, who died at ninety years of age, that a brother of his had a dog whom he wanted to be rid of, and so he just took him up to the wood and knocked him into the hole. He was sure never to see him again; but ten days after that, as he was leaving his house in the morning, there on the doorstep the dog was sitting, nothing but skin and bone, and scratches all over. Nobody knows where he came from. The peasants said he was not good enough for the devils, and that therefore they let him go again."

"Too thin for roasting," suggested Kurt. "They might have made broth of him, though."

But even Kurt's irreverence failed to disturb the gravity of the others. No story of *Gaura Dra-*

cuhui sounded too extravagant as long as *Gaura Dracuhui* lay before the listeners' eyes. In Gretchen's head there was ringing the air of the Bohemian's melancholy song, and the monotonous refrain—

"Beware, beware!
Of Gaura Dracului beware!"

It seemed to her that that Roman woman, sacrificed to blind jealousy, should henceforward, from a legendary myth, become to her an authentic personage. Had she not stood beside the hapless victim's grave?

It was a place to pursue a man in his dreams, to haunt him even by broad daylight. The shiver of interest which it awoke was both exquisite and painful. While longing to be away, one yet was loath to leave it. Some such feeling it was which kept them all silent how as they stood around it. The fascination seemed to be strongest upon István. He slowly paced round the edge, with his eyes fixed on the blackness below, stepping sometimes so perilously near to the deceitful brink as to deal nervous starts to his companions, and to call forth many an invocation to the *Heilige Jungfrau* of the *Wunderbaum* at Choteborschwitz from the scared Bohemian.

"Tell me," said Gretchen to the guide, "have you ever heard of any other accident happening here, except the death of your grandfather?"

"Never any other, Fräulein; there may have been accidents here, or there may not. Those who go down there do not come back to tell us stories. You know what the peasants here say. I told you of their superstition."

"A victim every century," said Tolnay, half aloud.

"And when was it that your grandfather was killed?" asked Mr Howard.

"In the last year of the last century, *mein Herr*."

"Ha!" cried Tolnay, raising his head. "Then the devils have not had their due this time?"

"No, Herr Baron," said the Bohemian, with a feeble attempt at a sneer,— "not if we give credit to the stories of this ignorant people." But the contempt in his voice was not convincing; his simple soul could not quite escape the gloomy magic of the spot.

"Perhaps, though, their sable majesties will be content with the kids," remarked Kurt; "that immolation took place this century, you know."

"But it is a human victim they want," explained the Bohemian, with a rather inconsistent eagerness; "it is human blood which they must taste once in every hundred years; the god of the valley has sworn it on his club."

"And Hercules keeps his oaths," muttered István.

His tone was so strange, that Gretchen hurriedly turned to leave the spot.

"We can do no more for to-day," she said; "experiments need not only daylight, but also ropes and tools. Now that the spot is found, all will be easy."

"I am not so sure of that," said Mr Howard; "even now, enlightened as we are, we might stumble round and round the place for half an hour, or into it perhaps, before we knew where we were. That one tree is not guide enough; if you will keep your patience for half-a-dozen minutes longer, I shall press a few more of these giants into the sign-post service;" and he began unclasping his big English penknife, and prepared to attack the nearest beech-tree.

But Gretchen had been seized with a sudden violent desire to be away from the spot. Just as a

minute ago she had felt drawn to linger, so was she now consumed by a fever to be gone.

"Leave it alone," she answered, impatiently; "we have already lost more time than we can afford,—and besides, it is getting too dark to see what you are cutting in the bark. Mr Howard, please, come away."

"As you command," said Mr Howard, slicing away doggedly at the beech-tree. "I shall leave the others alone; but just let me mark this one fellow. I am a practical Englishman, and it revolts my common-sense to leave the spot without having done something towards facilitating our next search."

"You are an obstinate and unpersuadable Englishman. But we are not going to stand by and watch you dig your crosses. There! if you will have the tree marked, do it this way;" and Gretchen pulled her handkerchief from her pocket, and twisted it round the lowest branch, knotting it fast with a double knot. "There! that is better than your pedantic cutting; it can be seen almost in the dark. Now, come away quick; let us lose no more time."

"I submit," said Mr Howard, reluctantly closing his knife. "But let us sum up the matter first: From the white mark, turn to the right—mind you, *to the right*; the hole lies sharp to the left."

"Yes, yes," said Gretchen, "that will do; let us go now."

They made their way back without much difficulty. It was not so dark now, for the moon was rising early, and poured through every loophole which the branches above afforded. They had never before been on the hills at so late an hour. But even with the possibility of robbers and bears before her eyes, Gretchen felt no apprehension; she

knew that both Tolnay and Mr Howard carried revolvers in case of emergencies ; and besides, was there not the gun of the Bohemian's unfortunate grandfather, which, after all, *might* go off at the right moment ?

The prostrate beech-tree was bathed in moonlight ; and, sitting on the trunk, they saw the figure of Dr Komers. He did not perceive them until they were close ; then he rose hurriedly, and came to meet them.

"At last ! I could not imagine where you were."

"We could not imagine where you were," said Kurt.

"I missed the Bohemian, but managed to find my way back here ; and seeing all the things about—plaids and so on—I concluded that my best course was to wait patiently."

"Ah, you don't know what you have missed !" said Gretchen.

And then, with much question and answer, and more or less excited narrative, the lawyer's ignorance was enlightened. The Bohemian knelt on the ground, strapping up the basket which had carried their provisions.

"It's a positive pity that you have not seen it," admitted Mr Howard. "I am bound to confess that we have nothing which beats it in its own line of horrors within the seas of Great Britain."

"Is it far from here ?" asked Vincenz.

"Not three minutes' walk."

"There is no particular necessity for seeing it to-night, is there ?" asked Kurt : "it is not going to close up just yet, I fancy."

Vincenz looked doubtful. As a matter of personal taste, he did not care much whether he did or did not see a black hole which was supposed to have no bottom. He took no special interest in either geological or historical researches.

This black hole, however, this *Gaura Dracului* which had played so great a part this summer, was not quite like any other black hole. He had assisted in the search for weeks past ; it was an object of interest to Adalbert Mohr ; above all, it was an interest to Gretchen. The position was a tantalising one. To be the only one of the party who should come back without having seen the spot—to be so near, and to go away ignorant,—it was enough to excite even a hitherto slumbering curiosity.

"Three minutes there," said Mr Howard, with his watch in his hand, "three minutes back, and one minute to stand and shiver at the edge,—seven minutes in all. We are so late already that seven minutes are neither here nor there. It will take us about that to pack up our things."

"You had better make up your mind quick, one way or the other," remarked Kurt ; "but if I were you, I should take it on trust."

"So should I," said Gretchen, as she flung her shawl around her. "It is so dark too, it would scarcely be safe. Dr Komers, do not go."

She had spoken low, but both Vincenz and Tolnay had heard her distinctly, and they both turned their heads towards her. For one instant Vincenz felt his heart leap up with a sort of wild hope, but it sank down again in the next.

"I am an old fool," thought Vincenz ; "it is only that she is in a hurry to get home."

"Don't go," said another voice beside him : it was Tolnay's, and there was again in it that mocking tone with which he loved to torment the lawyer. But the mockery to-night was not as light and laughing as was Tolnay's wont.

"And why should I not go ?"

"Because you would see nothing ; and besides—it would not be safe."

"I shall go," said Vincenz ;
"will any one show me the way?"

"The Bohemian will," said Mr Howard, as he carefully stowed away his yellow fungus in the empty provision-basket.

The Bohemian looked up from the bundle he was busy with on the ground. He looked piteously towards Gretchen.

"I can't do that, Fräulein ; it would be directly against my vow. I was never to reveal the spot to any living person."

"Oh, bother it!" said Mr Howard, with magnanimity ; "then I shall have to take you, I suppose."

"Yes," said Gretchen, eagerly.

"No," said Tolnay, stepping forward ; "I will show you the way."

There was nothing strange in the offer ; and yet every person of the party looked up surprised. Tolnay's mood all day had been so peculiar—so gloomy at moments and so wildly gay at others—he had showed so distinct a dislike towards Dr Komers, that even a slight politeness of this sort struck every one with momentary surprise.

Tolnay saw the start, saw it most clearly upon Gretchen's face, and asked somewhat defiantly—

"Well, have I said anything peculiar?"

"Nothing at all," said Mr Howard.

"Nothing," echoed Gretchen, more faintly.

"Nothing, except that everything about him is peculiar to-day," remarked Kurt to himself.

In the next minute already, no one could imagine what had caused that glance of surprise. Why should not Baron Tolnay have taken it into his head to be polite for once, even to Dr Komers?

"I am much obliged to you," said Vincenz, readily. "We had better lose no time."

"Much better," answered Tolnay ; and he stood for a minute looking at Gretchen, as if he had forgotten the business in hand. Then he turned quickly and walked away, Vincenz following close behind him.

Their steps echoed on the dry crisp moss and the crackling brown of the leaves. Gretchen watched them—Tolnay in advance, Vincenz still close behind him ; they would disappear among the bushes in another moment.

She got up, and, moved by some unaccountable impulse, called after them—

"Don't forget the signal, the handkerchief on the tree; the tree is to the right, the hole to the left."

She was not sure she had been heard, for Vincenz kept straight on, but Tolnay turned for a moment.

"I remember," he called back.

How white his face looked in the moonlight—ghastly pale it seemed at this distance. And his eyes ! Was it the moonlight alone which made them shine with that fevered brightness?

Something like dread, something like suspicion, for an instant crossed Gretchen's mind. She turned to Kurt, who was lighting a fresh cigar for the homeward journey.

"Kurt, will you not go with them? they are not out of sight yet."

Kurt laughed good-naturedly.

"My dear Gretchen, you are really very amusing. In what capacity am I to offer myself? Is not one man enough to show a hole in the ground to another man?"

"I suppose so," sighed Gretchen ; and she sat down to wait, half ashamed of the anxiety she had betrayed.

The two figures had vanished among the bushes ; for a few seconds longer they could hear the crack-

ling of the trodden leaves, and then they heard nothing more.

"We must be close to it," said Vincenz to Baron Tolmay, when they had plunged into the thicket of bushes. "Did they not call out something about a signal after us?"

István nodded without turning his head; but in the next second he came to a dead stand-still, and faced straight round. He was muttering something under his breath. Vincenz did not hear what the words were; and if he had heard them, he would not have known what to make of them. What István said to himself were only the few words—"I cannot do it."

"I am not going farther," he said, louder; but his voice was so husky that Vincenz could scarcely catch even this.

They were standing in a patch of clear moonlight; and Vincenz peering through his spectacles, thought he had never seen a man's face look as pale as István's face looked at this moment.

"Are you ill?" he asked, with sudden alarm, forgetting every thought of rivalry and petty differences in an honest fellow-feeling of sympathy. He put out his hand towards Tolnay's; but István started aside violently, as if he could not bear that touch.

"Yes—no; I don't know—perhaps I am ill, or perhaps I am mad. I am not going farther. You can find it for yourself; we are not twenty paces off."

"Do not trouble yourself," said Vincenz, with his usual courtesy. "I shall certainly find it for myself, if you will only tell me about that signal."

"It is a white handkerchief on the branch," replied Tolnay, slowly; and he broke off then, and fastened upon the lawyer's face a look so intense, so strained and fixed, that

Vincenz stood [wondering for a moment as to what that glance could mean.

There had been more than one moment to-day when Vincenz had met this man's eyes, and had puzzled over their expression. The hatred he had fancied to see in them might be explained; but there had been another element in those glances, for which he had not known how to account: that other element had looked like jealousy. What ground, in heaven's name—what ground for jealousy could the young, the rich, the fascinating Baron Tolnay have with regard to an obscure lawyer, without fortune, short-sighted, and on the verge of forty?

Vincenz had asked himself that question earlier in the day; he did not think of it at this moment. All he saw was, that Tolnay was looking strangely ill and disturbed.

"A white handkerchief on a branch," said Vincenz, recalling the other to the point in question. All István's energies seemed to have become absorbed in the intensity of that gaze.

"A white handkerchief on the branch,—yes," said Tolnay.

"And when I come to it, I must turn which way?"

Tolnay looked for one moment into the face of the man before him, and he saw that he was unsuspecting and open, ready to take him at his word. He set his teeth.

"When you come to it, you must turn,"—he paused—that pause was scarcely a second,—*"you must turn sharp to the left."*

"To the left; thank you," said Vincenz, courteously.

Tolnay made no response. He stood watching the other till he passed out of sight,—his own figure standing so motionless that he seemed scarcely to be drawing

breath. It was not pity which he felt even at this moment—it was a furious jealousy.

When he had stood for the space of a few seconds, he turned his face in the opposite direction and broke his way through the bushes—running as if he were being pursued, as if at any price he must get away from this spot.

Vincenz walked straight on, peering about for the signal. He had not got more than twenty paces when he saw it on the tree. This signal shone so white that not even a short-sighted man could

overlook it. It hung on the branch like a huge white flower, doubly pale in the moonlight. A slanting moonbeam, piercing through the branches, had touched it and made it shine out conspicuously. But though the signal on the branch was so distinct, the ground at the lawyer's feet was dark, and he did not see where he was stepping.

He stood for a moment, looking at the signal; then, exactly following Tolnay's direction, unhesitatingly, unsuspectingly, blindly, he turned, as he had been told—sharp to the left.

CHAPTER XXXV.—A RIDDLE.

"But long they looked, and feared, and wept."—BRYANT,

The last of the plaids was strapped up, the provision-basket had been got into travelling order; there was nothing now to do but to sit and wait till those two men came back again through the bushes. Mr Howard and Kurt exchanged occasional remarks; the Bohemian smoked his pipe, standing a little apart; Gretchen sat silent, feeling tired, and conscious of listening rather impatiently for the sound of the returning footsteps.

"Three minutes there," said Mr Howard, drawing out his watch, "three minutes back, and say three minutes for shuddering—nine minutes in all. They have been gone ten minutes now."

"Suppose we go on slowly, and let them follow," said Kurt.

"No," said Gretchen; "we must wait till they come."

"Oh, all right; but you looked as if you had had enough of this waiting business. I know I have."

"Four minutes for shuddering—five minutes," proclaimed Mr. Howard, holding his watch so that the moonlight fell upon it. "It is

beginning to grow into an unreasonable allowance. It is wrong in them to indulge in so many shivers when they know that we are waiting."

There was a short silence, during which Mr Howard kept his eyes on his watch, and the Bohemian puffed his pipe steadily. Then the puffs stopped, and the Bohemian stood in an attitude of attention.

"They are coming now," he said.

Mr Howard returned his watch to his pocket, and the Bohemian hastily lighted the little lantern which was to guide them down, for in the dense parts of the forest there would be no moonlight on their path.

They all looked towards the bushes to the right. But those bushes never rustled—they slept on peacefully in the moonlight; it was from the opposite side that the footsteps were approaching.

"Why, they have not been to the hole, after all," said Mr Howard, in a tone of disgust; "they are coming from the other side."

"Fine result of all our signal

hoisting," laughed Kurt. "They will be ashamed to say it; but I bet you, nine to one, they haven't found the place."

"Just what I said," Mr Howard wrathfully exclaimed; "we should have marked half-a-dozen trees at least, to make sure."

Meanwhile from between the trees the figure of a man was beginning to grow distinct, pacing slowly towards them.

"They are taking it easy," said Kurt, with disapproval.

"They?" repeated Mr Howard; "I only see one. Which of them is it? or is it neither?"

Just as he spoke, the approaching man had to cross a strip of moonlight. It was István Tolnay's face on which the moon shone.

"Holloa! what's this?" cried out Mr Howard.

"Did you not find the place?" shouted Kurt.

They shouted loud enough, but István neither hurried his pace nor made any answer to their calls. He came on somewhat laggingly, never raising his eyes from the ground before him. When he had reached them, he looked up at last, and started as if he had not expected to see them there.

"Where is Dr Komers?" he asked.

"That it just the question we were going to put to you," laughed Mr Howard.

"He has not come back, then?"

"No; certainly not."

"I thought not," said Tolnay; and he sat down on the trunk as if exhausted, passing his handkerchief over his damp forehead.

"But where is Dr Komers?" repeated Gretchen.

He answered without looking at her; "I did not go with him all the way; he said he would find the place alone. I did not care to go on—I felt giddy."

Every one was a little surprised; but the tone in which he spoke, and the pallor of his face, bore out his words. There was something subdued and exhausted about his manner. Even his eyes seemed to have no light in them. Mr Howard could not entirely suppress a contemptuous snort. It was in his eyes a degrading spectacle to see this wretched young foreigner so entirely knocked up by a day's walk in the mountains.

"You told him about the signal?" asked Gretchen.

Still not looking at her, he answered—

"I told him about the signal."

"And are you sure he understood you?"

"I am sure he understood me."

"Then he will be back directly," said Mr Howard, drawing out his watch with an impatient jerk.

"I hope so," said Gretchen, in a whisper.

Tolnay turned his head and looked at her as she said it, then his glance returned to the ground.

"Ten minutes for shivering he has given himself," said Mr Howard, still watch in hand. "This is getting past a joke; it is a positive want of tact."

"Or of sense of locality," said Kurt. "Most likely he cannot find his way back."

"Of course that is obvious," said Gretchen, somewhat irritably.

"What is the use of making such self-evident remarks?"

"Shall I go and look for the Herr Doctor?" volunteered the Bohemian, taking his pipe from his mouth.

"Look here! we have had enough of this sort of thing," objected Mr Howard. "There have been enough cross-purposes this evening without making more. If we begin looking for each other, we shall end by each going home in a different

direction. It is a golden rule, in such cases, to wait quietly at one's post."

The Bohemian submitted, but he did not look quite satisfied.

"We could call out for the Herr Doctor, at least; he may be close by without knowing it."

They shouted—first the Bohemian, then Mr Howard, then Kurt. The wood sank back into silence the moment they held their breath. There was not the smallest answering rustle, nor the crackling of trodden twigs, to tell them that they had been heard. Gretchen, as she sat listening, told herself that there was no cause for anxiety, and that presently she should hear the sound of parting branches, for which she was so earnestly listening.

"He may have heard, though he has not answered," said Mr Howard. "Let us hold our tongues for a little. We might as well give him the chance of a holloa."

They did hold their tongues. They all remained as motionless as though they had been lifeless figures grown into the surroundings of the moonlit forest. But Dr Komers apparently had missed his chance, for the answering holloa was not heard.

At last somebody spoke. It was Tolnay. He raised his head and asked—

"Why are we not going home?"

"But we are waiting for Dr Komers," said three voices together.

"To be sure;" and István's head sank down again.

It was Gretchen who spoke next—

"Where did you leave Dr Komers exactly?"

"I left him within thirty paces of the hole."

Then silence fell again upon the waiting group. These intervals of silence were beginning to be dan-

gerously suggestive. The intentness with which Gretchen sat listening for the sound of the bushes rustling was becoming irksome to herself. The strain grew with every second: from irksome it grew to be painful, and from painful it became torturing. Not even to herself would she acknowledge the creeping fear which, she knew not how, had sunk into her heart, and which was slowly encircling it with an icy band. She would not even look at her brother nor at Mr Howard, for fear of reading in their eyes something which would strengthen the suspicion within her.

It is not possible to determine at what point exactly a fear of this sort becomes alive. Often when we are scarcely yet aware that the seed has been sown, the plant is already growing fast. By this time they were all persuading themselves that they had not sat waiting and listening for so very long, and that there really was no reason for avoiding each other's eyes in the way they were unconsciously doing. And yet they did avoid a direct look; they stared at the bushes, at the tree-trunk, at everything but each other's faces. And so sharpened do our perceptions become in moments of suspense, that there was no member of the party who could not have stood a close examination as to the exact number of tree-stems within sight, or who could not from memory have accurately drawn the outline of that clump of bushes to the right.

That black bottomless hole was in everybody's mind, and no one had the courage to name it. The silence was unbearable; yet each felt that he would rather not be the first to break it. The first word said must be an acknowledgment of their secret fear—and it is

the acknowledgment which is hardest to make.

Kurt had thrown away his cigar. The Bohemian's pipe had went out without his noticing it. Mr Howard it was who made the first movement. He put back his watch into his pocket, and scratched his head. Then he got up, looked around, hesitated for a moment, and said in a studiously careless voice—

"I shall just take a cast about."

Some such signal they had waited for; they all began moving as if with one accord.

"Why, Gretchen, you are looking as white as a ghost," said Kurt to his sister. "We shall have to carry you down the hill, after all. Hadn't you better sit here while we are beating the bushes?"

Kurt's tone was meant to be cheerful, but his supreme coolness failed him a little just now.

"But I mean to beat the bushes too," said Gretchen bravely. "We are sure to find Dr Komers at once; don't you think so, Kurt?"

"Oh, at once—naturally, of course I do," said Kurt, clearing his throat; "only I don't like to make self-evident remarks. He'll be disporting himself somewhere close at hand, depend upon it; or perhaps he has had a moonstroke, you know."

The Bohemian made a few steps to follow the party, then turned, as if struck with a thought, and picking up the lighted lantern, took it with him.

The wraps and provision-basket were abandoned for a second time this evening. But they were not quite abandoned this time; for, looking back, Gretchen saw Baron Tolnay sitting where they had left him, his head still bowed and his arms folded. It seemed as if he were too much exhausted to take part in the search.

This part of the wood became alive with steps and voices. Every one felt that to make a noise was a relief after the silence and inaction from which they had just been freed. Frightened bats darted overhead, and moths flew out of the bushes around. The night-birds uttered shrill cries of surprise as they winged their way towards undisturbed depths of the forest; and the day-birds awoke in alarm, wondering if the night were already over.

The party separated in different directions; there was no word now said about playing at cross-purposes. They took great care in separating to inform each other that they were not going to search anywhere in particular, only to take a general look around.

Gretchen did not say much: she waited till the others were dispersed; and when she thought herself unobserved, she crept quietly in the direction of *Gaura Dracula*. She did not ask herself why she was going there; but some inward warning was drawing her in that direction. She stifled the warning with all the resolution she could muster; but, half against her will, she obeyed it. Above all, she would not have liked any one else to guess at the horrible fear which had been born within her. She crept softly through the bushes, where the rising moon was weaving strange effects. Her quick eyes espied the signal at once—the handkerchief tied to the branch, just as she had left it. Dr Komers could not have passed it without seeing it; and this thought for a minute revived her failing courage. Then she stepped forward and stood at the edge of the abyss.

Its aspect was somewhat changed from what it had been half an hour ago, for the moon threw a shaft of light right into its depth. The

trails of hanging plants seemed to quiver in the flood of silver; and the points of rock, the accident of formation, were much more distinctly seen now than they had been seen then. This new distinctness added to the terror of the place; it was like scanning the bare fangs in the widely opened jaws of some monster of unearthly size.

Gretchen bent forward, intently staring into the depth; then, raising her eyes, she started, for there opposite to her were the figures of Mr Howard and the Bohemian, both leaning forward, and peering down, as she had been doing.

Mr Howard appeared to be no less surprised at seeing her than she felt at seeing him. Before either of them had spoken, there appeared another figure on the scene. It was Kurt.

What horrible coincidence of idea was this? thought Gretchen, with a fresh shudder. There was another half-guilty start, and then everybody began talking at once, doing their best to explain that they had come here by the merest chance, and becoming very eloquent about the great facility with which people go astray in woods, and often wander about for hours in a circle, thus exhausting their own breath and their friends' patience. Examples were quoted and anecdotes told, mazes and labyrinths were talked of; in fact, everything which could prolong the conversation was laid hold of—for they were all as loquacious now as they had before been silent. They dreaded the first pause almost more than a little time ago they had dreaded the first word. Had not Dr Komers missed his way once already this evening? It was quite natural that he should have missed it again. They all knew how short-sighted he was; but even in

saying it, they recognised that this last argument was one which cut both ways. And then, unconsciously narrowing their circle, they argued that it would be ridiculous to suppose that a sensible man like Dr Komers—who had, moreover, been instructed as to the meaning of this signal—could by any possibility have stumbled over the edge. An ignorant person, to hear them talk, would have supposed Dr Komers to be possessed of as many eyes as Argus, and *Gaura Dracului* to be a roadside ditch into which it would be scarcely unpleasant to stumble. It was quite clear that the lawyer must merely have lost his way. And again they took to shouting, and to searching the wood around, hoisting up the lantern on a long stick and waving it as a beacon-light.

Their arguments were of the most convincing kind; and yet, at the end of another long half-hour, everybody was again standing round the hole, looking down with a fearful question in their eyes at the blackness below. Useless scrutiny! That hole is dumb and pitiless. It is unchanged, immovable, expressionless as before. No good in putting the dread question—Did a man pass this way? Did he fall down there—down, down out of sight? Is this the only grave he will ever have? The monster will give no answer. Truly those who go down there do not come back to tell us any stories. Perhaps the ivy-leaves, rustling faintly in this breath of air, are whispering to each other about what they have seen happen in this last hour; but it is in a language which human ears cannot understand. Human beings are so helpless in a case like this. Even that noiseless bat, taking a sweep downwards into the abyss, and up

again into the moonlight, knows more than they know. But the bat, like the ivy, tells no tales.

Tolnay gave no help in the search. He was very quiet, and apparently apathetic. He showed no disturbance when repeatedly questioned as to the exact spot on which he had parted from Dr Komers. His mind had, for the time, sunk into a strangely indifferent state; and at this moment it had not yet occurred to him that suspicion might fasten upon him. This very indifference, perhaps, prevented the growth of suspicion.

It had occurred, nevertheless, to more minds than one. Not to the Bohemian's—he was too simple-minded for such a thought; but both upon Kurt and upon Mr Howard such a possibility had dawned,—although for the present it had not, in Kurt's case at least, got further than a mere suggestion. It did not seem to bear investigation. To begin with, there appeared to be to the eyes of these outsiders an utter want of motive; for neither Kurt nor Mr Howard had ever suspected the existence of a question of serious rivalry between those two men. Neither of them had ever guessed the secret of the lawyer's love, as neither of them had ever doubted the success of Tolnay's suit. Even had they been aware of the lawyer's sentiments, the knowledge would not have helped to solve the present dilemma. It might have been worth István's while to clear a dangerous rival out of his way; but this one! The thing was inconceivable—almost as inconceivable to these outsiders as it had at first appeared to István himself. Nor had the others ever sought a more remote explanation of István's habit of ridiculing Vincenz than the young Hungarian's some-

what malicious and laughter-loving disposition. It was not likely, either, that a man who meant to do such a villanous deed would execute it in this strangely conspicuous manner. István's quietness of demeanour alone was enough to make suspicion hesitate. It did not strike his companions that this very subdued quiet was in itself unnatural. Mr Howard, of the two, felt the more distrustful. He remembered now that he had always disliked Tolnay; and he told himself that the furious temper of young foreigners in general, and of young Hungarians in particular, was well known and indisputable. But the motive? The motive eluded him entirely! An unexpected light was soon to fall upon the motive. As for Gretchen, her condition was like that of a person fighting with all her failing strength against an enemy who is slowly conquering her, and into whose face she feels a strange reluctance to look. If for one moment she pauses in the fight, she knows that she will be vanquished; and after that there will be something she shudders to think of—a sharp agony, a dreary blank,—something she does not perfectly realise, which she scarcely understands, but something that she feels will stab her heart within her.

Already her courage was failing by slow degrees. Soon she would have to look that enemy in the face. She saw that the Bohemian was silently busied with the piece of rope which he had taken off the bundle. He was knotting it round the handle of the lantern. It was with a strained and palpitating curiosity that she watched him, as on his hands and knees he crept to the edge; and when, still silently, he slowly and cautiously lowered the light down into the hole, then

Gretchen felt a rush of terror at her heart. That action seemed like the final acknowledgment of the dreadful thing she had feared. The visor had been torn off the face of the enemy, and she stared back helpless at him, at his gaunt features and grinning teeth. This it was she had feared, this she had shrunk from confessing, but which now she scarcely dared to doubt.

The colour ebbed slowly from her face; she put out her hand to save herself from falling, for a sudden faint feeling had overpowered her. It was to Mr Howard's arm that she found herself clinging, though she scarcely noticed who it was. She was thankful only for the steadiness and the strength which supported her in this fit of weakness. The violence of reaction had brought on a convulsive shiver, and as she clung to her support she was talking in an excited whisper.

"Oh, he is not dead! tell me that he is not dead!" she implored trembling. "I am so frightened! I am so wretched!"

Mr Howard looked down into the pale upturned face beside him. The eyes were imploring him for a word of hope, the lips were quivering. She was very young and very impressionable, he told himself, and no doubt German girls were more given to hysterics than English girls. It was no wonder if this scene had proved too much for the fibre of a woman's nerve.

"My dear child, I do not know; we must hope for the best," he said, tenderly almost, for so grim and middle-aged an Englishman. But his true thought penetrated all the same when he said, "He was your father's friend, was he not?"

"He was more to me than that!" she said, with a sudden burst of tears. She shook from head to foot with the vehemence of her sobs. She

did not know what she had said, nor to whom she had said it. She was half wild with a new pain which had overpowered her, which was beating her spirit down to the ground, without mercy and without hope.

She was very young and very impressionable, Mr Howard repeated to himself, and Germans were undeniable given to hysterics. But neither youth, nor sensitiveness, nor even hysterics, seemed able to account for the passionate flow of these tears. Perhaps the memory of the somewhat distant time when he had wooed and won Lady Blanche, helped Mr Howard to see the truth of this case more clearly.

Certainly he did see the truth, and at the same moment of recognising it, it appeared to him that a new and startling flood of light was thrown upon the events of the evening. It opened a hitherto unsuspected region of possibilities; unfortunately, also, it seemed to seal yet more hopelessly the fate of Vincenz Komers.

All this Mr Howard rapidly reviewed, even while he was leading Gretchen away from the dreaded spot, and forcing her to sit down and rest. He was an English gentleman, not only as to the shape of his wideawake and the cut of his coat, but also as to his mind and heart. He would not have allowed even her brother, could he help it, to see her weeping as she was weeping now. He felt a very keen pity for this girl, and a very earnest desire to do something towards her consolation; but as he led Gretchen away from the spot, his face betrayed far less emotion than it was wont to show at the moment of losing a particularly fine salmon-trout.

His thoughts were actively pursuing the workings of this newly

discovered motive. Tolnay now stood in a more suspicious light. But Mr Howard was a practical Englishman. He would raise no accusation until he had sifted his evidence. The first thing to be done was to discover some clue which would support the suspicion thus formed. In order to do this he must search carefully. Mr Howard was well acquainted with numberless instances in which such small circumstantial evidence as a wisp of straw, or the impression of a boot-nail, had clearly established the guilt or innocence of the accused. So while the other two were busied in lowering down to the hole the lantern whose glimmering rays scarcely attempted to pierce the black void below, Mr Howard searched with a sort of fierce energy. He went over the ground carefully; he examined every step with minute attention, he crawled and scrutinised and calculated with dogged perseverance. And he found something. It is not necessary here to state what precise clue it was which he found. Mr Howard himself, having found it, could not feel sure whether it pointed most towards Tolnay's guilt or his innocence. It was capable of various inter-

pretations, and for the present he resolved to betray this clue to no one. When he emerged from the bushes, he was cautiously wrapping up some small object, and stowing it away in the depth of his coat-pocket.

The lantern was standing on the moss again: they had given up their attempt. The Bohemian's gentle face was pale and grave; he had scarcely spoken since the moment of the alarm; he it was who had first given up all hope.

"If the idea were not so absurd," said Kurt to his friend, "I should be inclined to think that this business was not a mere accident. I suspect that some one might, if he chose, enlighten our ignorance."

There was no name mentioned, but Mr Howard understood the allusion perfectly. He looked at Kurt, and seemed to hesitate for a moment.

"Look here!" he said, "I understand you quite well; but I have a reason for asking you to keep quiet for the present. Do not let that man guess that any one suspects him. Will you promise?"

Kurt looked as much surprised as it was in his nature to be; but he sealed his assent with a nod.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—THE DAY OF RECKONING.

"When the scourge
Inexorable, and the torturing hour
Calls us to penance."

—MILTON.

It was past ten o'clock when Gretchen found herself on the homeward way. Mr Howard had taken command of the party, decreeing that the Bohemian should guide Gretchen back, while he and Kurt pursued the search as well as they could. Nobody knew exactly where Baron Tolnay was, and nobody seemed to care very much.

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He had disappeared during the search; for when for the last time they returned to the tree-stem, he was no longer sitting where they had left him. It was taken for granted that he had gone home in advance.

In their words they still clung to hope, although there was very little hope alive in their hearts.

They said aloud that next day must bring a solution to the riddle of to-night ; but they felt that the riddle could have no answer but one.

Gretchen obeyed Mr Howard mechanically. She followed the glimmer of the Bohemian's lantern, round which there ever hovered a cloud of moths bumping against the hot pane, and dropping to the ground with singed wings. Her steps dragged heavily ; and she was crying a little as she went along, —partly from the sheer oppression of bodily fatigue, and partly from the wretchedness against which she was too weak to fight.

That walk in the moonlight through the forest was a thing not to be forgotten. She passed by the same trees and bushes, the same groups of toadstools, which she had passed in the morning ; but they stood now without colour and without life—in the moonlight they all looked like the ghosts of themselves. Every spot where she remembered having exchanged a word with Vincenz Komers, struck her with a shock of painful recognition. It had borne a different meaning then from what it bore now.

What a glorious day had seemed in the future the day on which *Gaura Dracului* should be discovered ! And what a day of misery it had become in the present ! How short-lived had been the triumph of discovery ! how swift the blow which followed ! It was with shuddering recoil that she turned away from the very thought of the place. But she could not escape the haunting image. It was too near and clear to be suppressed.

Her fancy was incessantly at work—hovering with feverish persistence around that spot, and painting the details of that which

must have been. The step over the edge,—the fall,—the last wild clutch into empty air,—the sickening sense of void below ; and then —what was that the Bohemian had said of the fallen kids?—not another sound, everything quiet in a moment.

Everything quiet in a moment ! Could any length of description have brought home the truth with a more cruel clearness ?

And then, with a start and a violent effort of will, she would rouse herself and try to shake off these horrid fancies. They were but fancies after all—as yet. But her will had no power over her unnaturally strained imagination. Again and again she pictured to herself the scene ; she harrowed herself with extravagant thoughts. That he should have died this death of all others, this secret and fearful death—that it was which was the sharpest pang. In her despair now she thought that any mode of dying which was not this mode, might have been borne with resignation. She thought that the traveller who breaks his neck over a precipice in the Alps, is a man not to be pitied, but to be envied. He can lie dead in the sunshine at least, and his body will be carried home, and wept over by his friends, and loving hands will tend the flowers on his grave. Even the sailor who is drowned at sea may be washed ashore some day, and put to rest in some hallowed ground. While here, there is no coming back, no last look, no grave even, according to the usage of the world. Oh, it was maddening, distracting ! It would have been no great wonder if, during this night-walk, Gretchen's mind had given way under the pressure of torturing thought, which she was helpless to shake from her.

After a time those thoughts

grew so imperious, preying upon her with such merciless persistence, that she lost the sense of her surroundings, and walked on mechanically, following the glimmer of that lantern in advance, not knowing how long she had been walking thus, nor how much longer she would have to walk before reaching home.

There were countless reproaches pricking her mind through the midst of the one great grief. Each cold or unkind word which she had ever said to Vincenz Komers, came back to her memory now with unmerciful distinctness. How heavily they weighed, and how hotly they burned!

Instinctively she kept her eyes on the lantern, as she followed the track downwards. Now she noticed that her guide was slackening his pace, and then he stopped short altogether.

"Go on," she said wearily, as she reached him; "I cannot rest here."

The words stood still on her lips, for, as she spoke, the man turned and held up the lantern between them. It was not the Bohemian, Peering at her close, with the light playing full upon his face, István Tolnay confronted her.

It was like the weird transformation of a nightmare; and as in a nightmare, too, Gretchen felt a cold weight of fear fall on her. There was no one else in sight; for Tolnay had taken the lantern from the Bohemian and sent him on in advance.

As she met his eyes, Gretchen recoiled with a feeling of repulsion. He was as loathsome to her at this moment as if he had been some poisonous reptile which had started up in her path. She gave him one quick glance, half terror, half distrust; and then, without a second glance, and without a word, she pursued her way, walking with her

head erect, and crying no longer now, for some revulsion of feeling had dried up the very tears on her cheek.

She walked hurriedly, but Tolnay kept beside her. In the very moment of recognition, when she had turned from him in disgust, he had begun to speak low and hurriedly. His words were pressed and passionate, his voice shook, and his eyes shone with a wild brightness; but Gretchen never looked towards him—she kept her gaze fixed straight ahead.

He told her that he loved her, that he must possess her or die; that no joy in this world was to him a joy without her love, and no price in the world too high to pay for it. And she walked on the while, pale and shivering, with misery in her eyes and scorn on her lips, knowing it to be useless to try and stem the current of his burning words; and knowing, too, that there was no escape for her from this—for if she attempted to run, he would stand and bar her passage. There was in his manner a violence still subdued, but ready to break out at a word or look. For all the scornful pride in her bearing, Gretchen was yet trembling in mortal terror.

"Enough, enough!" she cried at last, as he paused. "This is not the time to talk of such things."

"This is not the time for silence," said István, "and I will be heard."

"Oh no! for pity's sake, no! What sort of a man are you to speak to me of love in such a moment as this?"

"In such a moment as this!" He repeated the words with a jealous emphasis. "Is that man to stand between us always, whether alive or dead?"

"He is *not* dead," said Gret-

chen, fiercely. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that neither man nor ghost shall rob me of you. I mean that no wretched German scribbler, for all his caution and all his care——"

"Stop!" she cried, vehemently. "You shall not say a word against him!"

"Shall I not? But I tell you that I shall. If you put him up between you and me, I shall. You called him your friend——"

"He *is* my friend; I shall call him so a hundred times. There is no one whose friendship I am prouder of than his."

"And you say this to me?"

"To you or to any one."

István laid his hand on her arm, standing still on the path, and forcing her to stand still also and face him.

"You loved him," he said, in a whisper. "I have heard that; is that true?"

She felt the tightening grasp of his fingers on her arm, and she saw by the light of the lantern the frightful pallor of his face. But her terror of a minute ago was vanished.

"You have heard right. I loved him—oh, with all my heart!" she cried, and burst into passionate sobs.

She felt no wonder at herself, nor at her own words, for it had not been the revelation of a moment which had made her own heart clear to her. It had been gradually growing clear during this wearisome walk through the forest. She wondered a little at not having known it before, at not having known it long ago; everything was so simple now, and so hopeless. She had found the answer to all these questions which had tormented her; but, alas! she had found them too

late! And yet, through the very blackness of her misery there pierced one ray of comfort; he had loved her—he had loved no other woman but her; that thought would be precious for ever.

She had drooped her head, having made the confession; not in shame,—she felt no shame in proclaiming her love—there was scarcely a blush on her cheek,—it was only that for one moment she had allowed herself to think of what might have been. She did not see the change on Tolnay's face, but his voice tore her roughly from her dreams.

In the moment when she spoke he had dropped her arm, and now his eyes shown dangerously.

"You loved him?" he repeated, slowly. "Then I am glad that I did what I have done."

"What have you done?" she asked, in a voice so weak and faint that it was a wonder he heard it at all.

István laughed. That laugh froze the blood in her veins.

"I showed him the way to *Gaura Dracului*."

"But you left him before you reached it."

"Yes."

"You gave him exact directions?"

"Very exact directions."

"You told him of the signal,?"

"I did."

"You said a white handkerchief on the branch?"

"A white handkerchief on the branch."

"And you told him to go to the right?"

István looked at her for a moment fixedly; he drew one hard deep breath before he answered—

"I told him to go to the *left*."

In the first instant she did not perhaps realise to the full what it meant. It required a momentary

look backwards, a quick review of the spot in her memory, before she could understand the inevitable truth. If Vincenz Komers had turned to the left of the signal, he must have been lost. There was no possibility of escape, no margin left for hope.

It was very quick, that mental review and conclusion. She had stood for a moment fixed and motionless, all her powers of thought concentrated upon one point; then she staggered up to a tree, and remained there with her back against it. There was no colour in her face, and no sound coming from her lips. If she had been a man, she would have struck him down where he stood; if she had been a Sibyl, she would have cursed him; if she had been a heroine of romance, she would have upbraided him at least with bitter words: but being only a weak girl, she did nothing and said nothing. She only stood confronting him, white and rigid, with her hands clasped convulsively across her breast, with pale lips parted and grey eyes dilated.

The very excess of the feelings which overpowered her took all expression, almost all intelligence, from her eyes; stupid and vacant, they stared back into his. There was scarcely a sign of life about her, but for the helpless twitching at the corners of her mouth. What can we do when our power of expression falls so far short of what we would express? Because she could not find words strong enough to utter, Gretchen uttered none at all.

Tolnay stood before her, grinding the heel of his boot deep into the moss, and gnawing his under lip fiercely.

Above her head there was a flutter of great wings, and an owl flapped out into the darkness, cry-

ing Uhu—uhu, through the forest. That sound roused her; her stiffly clasped hands dropped down, and the blood began to mantle faintly in her cheek. A shivering cry broke from her lips. Back upon her fancy rushed all those fearful pictures which had haunted her before, but this time they came as a certainty; and with them came a sense of pity, so aching, so keen, as to be almost intolerable. The wild clutch in the air—and then everything quiet! She had thought before that she was hopeless; she knew now how much she had still hoped a few minutes ago, before this word of certainty had been spoken.

When she looked up, Tolnay had come two steps nearer to her.

"You wanted to know what sort of man I am—do you know it now? I have told you what I have done; ask yourself why I did it. Do you imagine that such love as this can be baffled? Do you think that a man who has not stopped at a crime, will stop at anything less? I have proved my love well—ha, ha! What proofs has that German ever given you which could weigh against this one? Do you dare now to say that you will not belong to me, and that you will not love me?"

There was a wild triumph breaking out in his voice; it made Gretchen shrink away further, in unutterable disgust.

"I never loved you," she said trembling; "and now—I hate you."

"Ha! do you say that? Then call together your friends and point to the murderer. Do you hesitate? I shall not hide myself. Tell it to the world, if you are so minded. But"—he came a step nearer, and lowered his voice—"what you will not tell them, I know, is, that it is you who have made me do it."

"I?" cried Gretchen, in stupefied wonder—"I?"

"Yes, you alone. Have you not led me on, step by step, till I was mad? What have you been doing all summer, but playing with me fast and loose?"

"It was not play," said Gretchen, with a sudden qualm. "I have been very foolish, but——"

"Foolish!" laughed István roughly. "You have milder words for yourself than for me; you are only foolish, but I am criminal. Criminal I may be, but we are partners in crime at least. I claim your partnership. What have you meant with the smiles you have given me? What have you meant with your glances?"

"Nothing—nothing. Yes, I am guilty; but oh, spare me, Baron Tolnay—be merciful!"

"Have you had mercy with me all this long summer? I shall deal to you the same pity that you have dealt to me."

She was silenced. Yes, it was all true. She had played with him, she had led him on—O God! and was it this that she had led him to? Quite dumb she stood before him; her anger even was dead within her. It was he now who was the judge, and she the sinner. There was not one word which she could say in her defence. How tell him the truth? How confess that his fortune and not himself had been the stake for which she had played? And at this moment it seemed to Gretchen's roughly awakened conscience, that of the two István was indeed the lesser criminal; and that if the blood of Vincenz Komers cried for vengeance, it was upon her head alone that the vengeance must fall. The pang of remorseful pain which stabbed her was so sharp, that she could do nothing but bow her head and suffer it in silence.

She deserved it, as she deserved each bitter word from Tolnay's lips.

And Tolnay did not spare her. Now at least his suppressed excitement broke out uncontrolled. His reproaches were fierce and cutting. He was a changed man altogether from the smooth Baron Tolnay of the *salon* and ball-room. The thin coat of varnish was pierced through, and close beneath it there lay the raw nature of a savage. His education and his principles were such as enabled him to shine very brilliantly in society, but they were not such as could restrain him at a moment like this. It was a very bright polish which he wore on the surface, but its quality could not stand the test of passion. There was rage and bitterness in what he said, and yet there was no word which spoke of remorse for the deed which had been done. Gretchen might well have wondered, as she had wondered often, what element it was which was missing in his nature. It was a very simple element indeed. It was only that he had no conscience. She had fancied that she saw this more than once before, but she had never believed that the want could be as total as it was here. Owing to the constitution of his mind, rather than to a personal reluctance, he would not have been capable of a premeditated crime—as little as he would have been capable of a premeditated act of any sort; but under a momentary influence he was capable of anything, and he had been capable of this.

He paused at last in his wild reproaches, and looked for her to speak; but she had covered her face with her hands, and stood before him immovable and silent.

"And now your answer—I am

waiting for it ; what have you to say ? ”

“ Only to beg that you should leave me,” she faltered, looking up.

“ Gretchen ! ” There was a new menace in his voice ; the wildness was breaking out afresh. “ You dare not reject me, Gretchen ! ”

“ I am guilty—very guilty,” she said, trembling ; “ but heaven knows I can give you no other answer.”

He dashed the lighted lantern to the ground, so that the glass shivered and the flame went out.

“ And both heaven and hell know that I have lost my soul for the love of you ; and neither heaven nor hell shall cheat me of the prize ! ”

His excitement was rising ; but at this moment he checked himself, for there were sounds in the forest. Both he and Gretchen had forgotten how near they were by this time to the more frequented paths, and the voices of some woodcutters returning late from the hills struck upon them both with surprise. Gretchen uttered an exclamation of relief ; Tolnay ground an oath between his teeth.

“ Let it be for to-day ; but we shall speak again—this is not the end. We have not done our reckoning yet ; this night’s work must be complete. Never think that I regret. Were it undone at this moment, I should begin it again ; but there is no need—the work is well done. You may not be mine, but you can never be his. Is it you who are victor, or am I ? ”

And without waiting for any

word of hers, István turned and vanished down the pathway.

Gretchen sank on her knees, half fainting, by the tree-stem. She was not far from home now ; but she was so weak, that she could not stand longer. She was so worn out and sick at heart, that she sobbed helplessly in the dark.

Thinking of the man she loved, lying dead and alone, she prayed to God at this moment that she might die also. Must he never know of her love, nor of how her heart yearned for one word or one look of his ? Every detail of his manner and look, once so familiar and so despised, became now inestimably precious : she had scarcely thought of them until this moment, when that figure was for ever blotted out from her view. Ah ! was it thus that her life’s romance was to end ? Was it thus that her love was to be slain ? Had he died without one word from her ?

Too late ! Her chance was past. She knew it, as she crouched with her head against the tree stem. The bats and moths darted under the branches ; but to her fevered fancy they were not as ordinary bats and moths. The forest seemed peopled with fitting phantom-shapes.

They circled high above her head, and shrieked through the air, “ Too late ! too late ! ” and swooping down, they flapped their demon wings in her face and moaned—“ Too late ! too late ! too late ! ”

THE RUSSIAN MILITARY MANŒUVRES, 1884.

[TO THE EDITOR OF BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.]

The following letters, written during the manœuvres of the Corps of the Russian Guard last autumn, were addressed to members of my family, and without any view to their publication; but I am told by friends that they would interest the general public, and as they relate adventures and describe scenes which do not fall under the notice of an ordinary tourist, I beg to place them at your disposal. At the invitation of the Emperor, three officers of the British army were selected to attend these manœuvres as his Majesty's guests. I had the honour to be the head of the mission, and my colleagues were Colonel Low, C.B., a distinguished officer of our Indian Cavalry, and Captain Davidson, an officer of the Royal Horse Artillery, well qualified to represent a corps so famed for its smartness and scientific training.]

GRAND HÔTEL DE L'EUROPE,
ST. PETERSBURG, Aug. 11, 1884.

How am I to tell you all that we have seen and done since our arrival here yesterday at 7 P. M., I know not, for at every instant some one comes in with orders, hints as to etiquette, or some message which requires close attention; but I think I shall have half an hour somehow, before we leave for Krasnoe Selo. Our journey, though very tedious after entering Russia, was uneventful. Our sleeping-cars from Berlin to the frontier were noisy, hot, and disagreeable. At the frontier (Wirballen) station we secured others, and found the Russian sofa-beds much the best. We never travelled more than twenty miles an hour, and our halts were frequent and long. From the moment we crossed the frontier, tea became our beverage, and the *samovar* smoked in readiness at every station, however small. Bread good; a sort of soup, in which among no end of vegetables cabbage was the most easily recognised, was really not bad; and my colleagues seemed to find the beer good. We had Colonel Chenevix Trench, the military *attaché* at Petersburg, with us;

and as he can speak Russian, he was of very great use, and has become a pleasant addition to our party. The country we traversed is as flat as Salisbury Plain, and absolutely without interest, save in the names of a few towns like Wilna, Pskof, Dünaburg, &c., each of which brings some historical incident to one's memory. The sun was very powerful, but the air became lighter, and reminded us of Scotland as we went further and further north—till at last, after a short halt at Gatschina, where we substituted undress uniform for our dusty travelling clothes, I could see the cupola of St Isaac's Church, a golden speck in the distance; and after another quarter of an hour, found myself bowing and hand-shaking with various tall figures in uniforms of varied hue, but of unquestionably Russian type. A gorgeous Court footman, in an orange- and - red greatcoat and cocked-hat, seized my bag and cloak; others surrounded Rowland, my servant; while Colonel Low and Captain Davidson were similarly looked after. Passing through the royal waiting-room, I was handed into a very pretty victoria, drawn by two black long-

tailed steppers, and with Captain Count Stenbock of the Garde à Cheval, who was to be attached to me during my visit, by my side, was whisked off through the broad uninteresting streets of the suburbs to this hotel.

CAMP KRASNOE SELO, ST PETERSBURG,
Aug. 11, 1884 (*July 30*, Russian time).

Hurried off to the embassy to pay my respects to Sir Edward Thornton, I left off with the announcement of my finding myself in a very comfortable room in the Hôtel de l'Europe. In three-quarters of an hour we had to be ready to dine with the officers of the various missions. Blue coat, sword, sash, &c., were donned, and I found myself for *the moment* the senior of the assembled party, as Prince Windischgrätz, who is a Feld-marschall-lieutenant of the Austrian army, and the French general and German general, who are my seniors, had not arrived. I had an agreeable Italian, General Sterpone, on my right, and the officer who looks after all the missions, Colonel Tchitchakoff of the staff, on my left, both speaking French.

As soon as dinner was ended, and coffee and cigarettes discussed, the carriages came round, and we started for a drive to the islands which lie between the branches of the Neva. The air was refreshing, and of course in this northern region, though it was 9.30, there was a twilight which was sufficient to enable one to see without difficulty; and the appearance of the huge buildings, and especially of the thin spires of the church of St Peter and St Paul, and the fortress on the first island, cut out as they were in sombre outline against the clear northern sky, was not without a certain charm. Our drive did not end thus sentimentally. On the fur-

ther island, and on the northern bank of the river, is a sort of *lust-garten*, called "Livadia." Here we alighted, and found ourselves among coloured lamps and crowds of the *bourgeoisie* regarding with admiration four female gymnasts, who were tying themselves in knots, and hanging from ceilings by their feet. Passing by this we reached a pretty little theatre, and from a smart box witnessed a very fair representation of "La Fille du Tambour Major" by a French company, who sang and acted well. This lasted an hour, and on going out we saw at another stage in the gardens a company of Bohemians in Russian costume, singing Russian national and gipsy songs, amid the rapt silence of the crowd. But these were said not to be the best Bohemians, so we were taken on to another *café*, where, in a rather low and stuffy room, we were treated to real Bohemian choruses. These singers—about a dozen men and the same number of women—were not in costume, but sang with wonderful taste; and though the extreme plaintiveness of most of the songs, sometimes varied by bursts of wild appeal, *all* too in a minor key, gave a weird character to the entertainment, the interest it aroused was (to me at least) so great that I forgot all fatigue. These Bohemian choirs are peculiar to St Petersburg and Moscow, and are heard nowhere else. The performers all have the gipsy type and the lithe figures and restless expressions of their race. And so at last homewards; the horses galloping through the now empty streets and over the bridges, the view from which at night of the Neva and its well-lighted quays is really splendid. To bed at 2.30. Our orders were to dine next day at 12, and go

by train to Krasnoc at 1.30—all our luggage going at 10.30. So after coffee, and packing off my servant with orders to have our *red* coats ready for us on our arrival at the camp, I went to call on Sir Edward Thornton, our ambassador. His house was in the hands of workmen (Lady Thornton being in the country). It is well situated, facing the Neva on one side, and the great square or Champ de Mars on the other. Returning from the embassy, I found all assembled for an early dinner, for which no one had much appetite, and then we all started *en cortège* for the trains, and were taken great care of by Prince Obolensky, the Grand Marshal of the Palace. On arriving at Krasnoe, more carriages and footmen. My vehicle is number eight, with two fiery little horses. We reach our quarters on the hill near the Emperor's pavilion, and I find myself in a nice little apartment, bedroom, sitting-room, and servants' room—all *sous la clef*—four other generals being in the same house. Our luggage is late, and we have only three-quarters of an hour to get ready to join the Emperor's party on his Majesty's state entry into camp.

We got our luggage at last, and in full *tenue* proceeded to call on the Grand-Dukes Nicholas, uncle, and Vladimir, brother to the Emperor. Prince Windischgrätz headed us; General de Miribel, the Frenchman, followed; I came next, followed by General Leczinski of the German army, each general followed by his staff, and so on. We found the Grand-Dukes on the balcony of their wooden pavilion, and formed a line or semicircle. They came round and spoke to each general. My Crimean medals, of course, attracted notice, and the Grand-Duke Nicholas alluded

rather nicely to our having been *vis-à-vis* to each other in Sebastopol. When this was over, we found in the main street, which traverses the whole line of pavilions, horses and orderlies, and we mounted at once. Meanwhile the street was being lined with troops on foot without arms, from the Emperor's pavilion towards the camp, and the general staff of the Russian army, headed by the Grand-Dukes and the Minister of War, formed in line opposite to us on either side of the street. The variety of uniforms, and the great names of some of the wearers, gave a certain impressiveness to the scene, Cossack orderlies hurrying to and fro, Tcherkess attendants on the Emperor, &c.; while the German Ambassador General Schweinitz, and the French Ambassador General Appert, both generals of distinction, joined our line and headed it. And all this time the troops were singing, and the singing became a shout as the carriage of the Empress, drawn by four white ponies, appeared, with the Emperor riding by her side. We followed, and thus reached the camp, where the whole of the troops were formed in line four deep in front of their tents. Each battalion took up the shout as we passed—a low hoarse hurrah. We rode at least a mile and a half past the line of tents, and must have seen 50,000 men. The ground is prettily *accidenté*, and altogether well suited for camp purposes. At the end we came upon the Guard Regiments and the Préobrajensky Regiment, with whom finished the inspection; and here were assembled all the bands and drums, to the number of 800, in one compact mass facing the Empress's pavilion or tent, at the door of which she and her ladies alighted, and were joined by the Emperor and Grand-

Dukes. We all dismounted and came inside the square, of which the royalty and staff formed one side, the musicians the opposite side, the other two sides being composed of officers of the various corps who had hurried to the spot. In the centre, on a mound, stood the conductor of the united bands of music, and near him one drummer-boy (or perhaps a lad of twenty), of whom more anon. We (the foreign missions) stood in line, and the Emperor came down from the pavilion and spoke to each of the generals. He was very gracious to me, and inquired about my service and the commands I had held. This over, he stood alone in the centre, and a detachment of sergeants in full marching order passed him one by one, each sergeant giving the evening report of his picket and of the usual "watch-setting" in a loud voice, the Czar thus fulfilling for the moment the rôle of camp-commandant. We (generals only) were then taken up, one by one, to the Empress, who talked to me about the Princess of Wales, Cowes, Osborne, &c., and was altogether gracious and charming. The tea was handed round, and the crowd of officers and of the troops generally kept closing round the square as the hour for the "retreat," or *Zaira* drew nigh. Meanwhile heavy clouds had gathered in the horizon, and a storm seemed to threaten us, though the view down the slope and over the valley to Krasnoe, distant about a mile, was not rendered less beautiful by the combination of waning sunlight and threatening clouds. Eight o'clock sounds; each field-battery fires an evening gun; three rockets shoot into the air, and the drums and bands roll out, with a solemnity and volume of sound not easily forgotten, the evening hymn. As

the last notes die off, the drummer-boy steps forward, the bandmaster descends, and the little drummer, sole occupant of the square, repeats slowly but with perfect distinctness the Lord's Prayer. Every head is uncovered and bows, from the Emperor to the furthestmost spectator; and I should from my heart pity the man who, as the little lad's "Amen" went up in its solitary simplicity, could scoff at or even be unimpressed by the silence which followed.

There was a total absence of all exaggeration or straining for increased effect. The bands then burst forth with the Russian national air, so well known to all of us, and the scene closed as night fell.

Our carriages came up, and we raced home; no, not home, for there was a gala performance at the theatre, and we were driven straight there, and sat three mortal hours listening to a Russian play. The Emperor and Empress and Grand-Dukes were all there, and remained for a ballet; after which we supped at the Emperor's pavilion, and I was placed next a nice little *dame d'honneur*, who was an enthusiastic admirer of George Eliot's works; and when I told her I had known Mrs George Henry Lewes, she seemed to look on me as a very privileged person indeed. I was starving, not having tasted food since our dinner in St Petersburg at twelve, except the Empress's tea at the "camp retreat."

It was 1.30 before I got to bed.

I was certainly tired, and hoped for a good night's rest before the great review which was to take place next day. I had been asleep about an hour and a half, when an orderly arrived who woke the servants, and bade us all turn out, as there was an *alerte*. Disbelieving my servant, I tried to court once more

the drowsy god, when in rushed Count Stenbock, confirming the announcement, and that we were all expected at the Quartier Général in ten minutes. I need hardly say that I was dressed in no time, and that we started at 4.30 at a brisk canter across the plain, and were all in our places in front of the Emperor's pavilion in good time. Meanwhile the troops had hurried into their positions, and the Emperor, mounting a small grey barb, rode down the line, saying "Good morning, my children," to each regiment, to which the men shout reply in unison. After the inspection came the march-past; and as there were fully 50,000 on the ground, this was a long affair, and the morning air struck chill upon us all, besides the annoyance of the dust, which absolute smothered us. But the appearance and bearing of the troops were superb, and merited praise all the more owing to the alacrity with which they had turned out at so early an hour. We were home by nine o'clock, much interested by all we had seen, but *very* cold and hungry. Luncheon at one o'clock, and then we passed the whole afternoon driving about, paying official visits to generals and heads of departments. Happily the visiting consisted in leaving cards; but it is *de rigueur* to do this in state, so I donned cocked-hat, and we drove *en cortège*.

Dinner at seven o'clock. I was next to a very agreeable Princess Kutusoff. I was rather tired, but ashamed of being so, as no one is tired, apparently, in this country. Afterwards to the theatre, this time "La Mascotte" in French, very well given and very amusing. It was 1.30 before I could get to bed. It appears this Czar had never given this *alerte* before, though the late Emperor was very fond of taking people by surprise.

Even the Minister of War, General Vannowsky, told me that he knew nothing of it till after two o'clock on the same morning.

Next morning, the 13th, was the *benediction des drapeaux*—a most interesting ceremony, which takes place twice a-year. The time, fortunately for me and indeed for all, was eleven, so that we were not obliged to turn out before a reasonable hour. In full dress we waited for the Emperor and Empress near a little chapel on the edge of the lake hard by. Detachments of picked men from every regiment, with the standard or colour, were ranged in double line.

The whole Imperial family went down the line and into the chapel, which was open at the sides—that is, was only pillars and roof. Popes and priests, and the choir of the loveliest voices I ever heard. A long service, very sweet and solemn music, all of us bareheaded. Then they all returned to the steps of a pavilion, and the detachment marched past; the Empress received the report of the day of *her* regiment, the Emperor of the others; and so home to breakfast or luncheon, where again I found myself next Mdlle. Kutusoff, and on the other side a nice Baroness von Hinüber, who belongs to the ex-Hanoverian Court, and is here with one of the Hanoverian princesses. After luncheon a series of official visits to members of the Imperial family—cocked-hat again! We had to write down our names some twenty or thirty times, and leave two or three dozen cards on the courtiers, and then our official visits were, I think, fairly accomplished! I was glad to get back to my quarters.

This morning (14th August) we were up at seven. Off at eight on wheels to the plains, where we found our horses; and when the

Emperor joined us, we witnessed a very interesting field-day on a small scale, *real* shot and shell being used against an enemy represented by dummies or painted figures life-size. The whole thing was well done and highly instructive. Then home as hard as we could drive, as I had to breakfast at mid-day with the Emperor.

The rooms are small, for the present Czar will not use the large pavilion where his father was wont to live, but keeps to that which he had when Czarowitch. So only the heads of missions were invited. The Emperor was very civil, talking to each of us. I was presented to the Hanoverian princess (sister to Princess Frederica), who seemed pleased to talk of England and the English. Then I was presented to the Grande-Duchesse Serge, the bride, daughter of the Grand-Duke of Hesse and of our dear Princess Alice. She is quite charming, and the image of her mother: she has the same expression that was the Princess Alice's. He (Serge) looks like a well-bred gentleman, and is said to be clever. Coffee and cigarettes in the garden, a band (which played, by the way, "Am Meer"), Circassian sentries, Emperor and Empress moving about—you will understand the scene—then home, and this brings me to the *present* hour, 3 P.M. I shall keep the letter open till late to-night, as I may have more to add, for at four we mount our horses again, and go to see another field-day. So dinner is not to be till eight, and then there will be the play! In a few days, I hear, we are to go down to the coast to Narva and Yamburg, where the great manœuvres begin, and last five days. Prince Windischgrätz has asked me to go to his manœuvres at Cracow, at the end of the month; but I don't think I shall accept, as the distance is

great; and if we are kept at this high pressure, we shall all want repose.

KRASNOE SELÓ,
Friday, 15th Aug.

My last letter went to the post this morning. To-night I resume, but shall probably finish this at St. Petersburg, where we go to-morrow after the morning's work, returning here on Sunday afternoon. We had a field-day or sham-fight in the afternoon yesterday, after the morning's experiences with the artillery. The Empress rode on horseback, and rides very well. The young Grand-Duchess Serge was with her, also on horseback. There was not much that was edifying in a military sense, but the sight was pretty; and as we galloped home across the plain, the enormous staff and varied uniforms, following the Empress to the point where the carriages were awaiting us, made a very interesting picture. I had barely time to dress for dinner, and then a French operetta followed. Home at midnight. This morning at 8.10 off to the same ground, for a field-day of the line's infantry and artillery. Not bad on the whole, and the ground very well suited for such a display, the morning air deliciously cool and refreshing. Home to breakfast at twelve. At two, inspection of the Ecole de Cavalerie and the Ecoles d'Equitation and d'Infanterie. Then I went to see my old friend and colleague General Lubowidski, who was delighted to show me his beautiful regiment of Grenadiers of the Guard. I had a good look at everything, down to the canteen and kitchen, and was very much interested. He was with me, you know, at the French Manœuvres in 1880. As I walked amongst

the men, he whispered to me to say to them, "Sdārōva," on which they all shouted some words which meant welcome ! Then home to rest and to dinner. I declined the play to-night, it being a Russian piece. I sat between Princesse Kutusoff and Princesse Apraxin, both very pleasant. After dinner I was glad to renew acquaintance with Detaile, the French painter, who is here on a special engagement to the Emperor to paint military subjects. His works are well known, and he has often been in England. We have our orders now for next week. On Monday we shall redistribute our luggage, and send all that we do not absolutely want to St Petersburg, to the hotel. On Tuesday the generals go with the Emperor to the neighbourhood of Narva for the five days of grand manœuvres. I expect we shall have to rough it. The others go with the headquarters of the opposing sides, and will certainly have to rough it. On the 26th, I believe, we all return to St Petersburg, and I therefore suppose that on the 27th I am a free agent again. I shall probably employ 27th and 28th in visiting St Petersburg, and then go to Moscow for two nights, returning to St Petersburg, and home by Stockholm and Gottenburg, or else go to Warsaw and Berlin, and home by Flushing.

ST PETERSBURG,
Sunday, 17th Aug.

I must close this as post goes, and I am off to St Isaac's and to the English church. I went this morning to the Kazan Cathedral, and then to St Isaac's, of which I will not attempt to give a description, though it merits one. I shall visit it for its architecture again. To-day I went for the church music, and *indeed* the choir is heavenly.

Never did I hear anything to equal it : the boys' voices so pure, the altos so clear and bright, the basses so deep ; time and tune, harmony and taste, all far beyond any church singing I had ever heard. No instruments. Since breakfast a visit *en masse* to photographers, where we have all been immortalised in a group ; then to the fortress and the church of St Peter and St Paul, where we saw the royal tombs and much gilding and pomp. Then to the house of Peter the Great, and now we are waiting for the train to go to Krasnoe Seló, where there are camp races at 6 P.M.

The field-day of the Guards yesterday was good and instructive, and the spectacle very fine. The Empress rode. I write in haste, for Count Stenbock is calling to us to come to the train.

GRAND HOTEL DE L'EUROPE,
ST PETERSBURG, *Aug. 19, 1884*
(Old Style, *Aug. 7*), 6 P.M.

We reached the camp at 5.30 on Sunday afternoon, and were taken straight to the Imperial stand, into the state tribune, to which we generals were specially admitted. The racing was amusing, officers and Cossacks riding their own horses. The Empress came across the room and talked to me a long while about her sister and England, and seemed interested to hear news of people she had known. The Emperor, too, talked a little, and many of the Grand-Dukes. At 7.30 I thought we were going home to dinner ; but we were driven to the theatre instead, where we heard "La Mascotte," with long intervals between acts, till nearly twelve o'clock. One of the Dukes of Leuchtenberg sat in the next stall to me, and we talked a good deal ; but I was growing

ravenous with hunger, for I had had nothing since mid-day except a cup of tea in the tribune which I had to put down only half tasted, owing to the Empress coming over to speak with me! At 12.30 (P.M.) we were taken to the large pavilion, but could only get a little chicken and *zakuska* and some tea. However, I ate like a ploughboy, the French ambassador alongside of me being in the same plight—then to bed. Up early, as everything had to be ready for a move—some of our luggage to go off to Narva, and the rest, with ourselves, to go to St Petersburg. Meanwhile we put on full dress for the Préobrajensky *fête*, and at eleven o'clock were driven over to the camp of that regiment, and witnessed a very interesting parade before the whole Imperial family. Popes, altars, vestments, and sweet music, and then the regimental pope blessed and sprinkled the Imperial family, and then marched down the ranks and blessed the men; and then a march-past and a visit to the camp and the men at their dinners, and hurrahs from every one as the Empress drank to their health. Afterwards a tremendous breakfast or dinner at the pavilion, the whole of the officers being invited, besides the entire Court. We sat down about 450, and the whole of the arrangements were complete, and the dinner hot and well served. On my right hand was the Princess Marie of Hanover, and on my left the Princess Kotchoubey, who is the head of all the ladies of the Court; she was pleased to be gracious to me, and talked a great deal. With the Hanoverian Princess, I, of course, talked English, and it seemed to be like talking to one of our own Royal family.

The Emperor rose towards the end of dinner, and called upon all to drink to the health of the Emperor of Austria, whose birthday it was. We then drank to the health of the Préobrajensky Regiment, and then the Imperial party rose and stood about and drank coffee. I was in close conversation with some one of the generals when the Grand-Duchess Serge (the bride) came across the intervening space and did me the honour to converse for some time about her mother, and the Queen, and of England. It was so touching, and altogether so indicative of a desire to speak with some one who, at any rate, could refer to persons and places which reminded her of her childhood.

By this time it was four o'clock. We had then (the foreign generals) to be presented to the little Grand-Duc Héritier or Czarewitch, at his own pavilion. He seems to be a nice lad; very quick and intelligent; he spoke English with a very pure accent. We had just time to change our red for blue coats, and catch a train at 5.30, arriving at St Petersburg at 6.30, minus our luggage and servants, who did not turn up till past eight o'clock. However, I went off at once to see the Winter Palace, and was shown all over that most extraordinary building, which is about five times as big as Buckingham Palace, and *ten* times more magnificent. I was shown the cabinet of the great Emperor Nicholas, left just as he *left* it, for the bed remains in which he died, and all his things are lying around the little low couch, which was all he indulged in. (But the objects of interest are endless, though I admit that my sense of the fitness of things was shocked when, in the corner of the *cabinet de travail* of the late unfortunate

Czar, I was shown the bed on which he expired in agony, and the *gardien*, lifting the coverlet, pointed to the mattress saturated with blood, and left just in the state in which it was when the poor Emperor breathed his last.

This morning (Tuesday, 19th) we started at nine o'clock on board an Admiralty steamer for Cronstadt. Our ambassador, Sir Edward Thornton, joined the party, and I had a great deal of interesting conversation with him during the voyage out and home. It takes one and a half hour to go down the Neva to Cronstadt; and though the banks of the river are flat, except where you see on the left bank the woods of Peterhoff and Oranienbaum, there is a certain grandeur in the river, owing to the great mass of water. At Cronstadt we were taken to see batteries and guns, and forts and turrets, and finally were entertained at luncheon by the marine officers, and returned to St Petersburg at six o'clock. Mr Albert Brassey's yacht, the *Czarina*, was lying off Cronstadt, and very well she looked. I now come to the end of my story! We have had dinner, and I have had a short drive since in the cool of the evening declining any further dissipation, and I am now going to bed, for we start early for Narva, and shall have five days of real hard work, I suspect.

GOMONTOVO, half-way between
KRAENOE SELÓ and YAMBURG, Aug. 21, 1884.

We left St Petersburg yesterday by train at 9.30, and stopped at the second station beyond Gatchina on the Baltic line of railway, where we found carriages, which, after a drive of 20 versts, brought us here. This is a fair specimen of a country gentleman's

house—not a *château*, but a good comfortable house made of wood, with good rooms fairly furnished. It belongs to Baron Veglio, and has been placed at the Emperor's disposal for three days as his headquarters. The weather, alas! has become unfriendly to us, and we arrived in a heavy storm of rain, and had to wait two hours for our baggage. But it was amusing to watch the Emperor's *fourgons* with the *equipage de campagne* arrive; and I must admit that they well understand how to improvise even an Imperial camp. The Emperor's and Empress's campbeds were unpacked and settled up on a room on the ground-floor, the Grand-Duc Héritier being next door. Then there was the travelling plate, all in special boxes, silver mugs instead of glasses, and no china at all. Outside in the park or enclosure, fifty yards from the house, two large and twelve small tents had been pitched, where the generals dine, and the minor officials sleep. I and the French general *en mission*, De Miribel, share a room in the house; and in the same passage with us, in little rooms, are the Grand-Dukes, the Minister of War, and the other foreign generals. My French colleague is very cheery, and sleeps like a top; I only wish I could sleep half as well as he does. We are at this moment seated opposite to each other at a little table, he on a chair, I on my bed, each writing to his wife!

At six o'clock we had an excellent dinner in the large tent, which, by the way, was used by the late Emperor through the whole of the Plevna campaign, though we all wore our cloaks and our forage-caps on account of the cold and rain. At eight o'clock the Emperor and Empress arrived from Peterhoff, and we saw no more of them

till this morning, when at nine o'clock we started for the opening scene of the manœuvres. The idea is simple : a force having landed near Narva threatens the capital ; a smaller force, representing the garrison of St Petersburg, opposes, in order to hold it in check till reinforcements arrive. I may dismiss the subject of this display ; for what we saw to-day was not worth seeing,—the commanders on either side seemed afraid of doing anything. The Empress rode, notwithstanding the rain ; and after three or four hours we returned, and then we generals had to join the Imperial party at breakfast. I sat next the Prince of Oldenburg, who likes talking English, and has a frank and soldier-like manner. We had a long conversation on wolf-hunting ; but tell Gladys I have seen no wolves as yet, though they say there *are* some not far off.

It has rained hard ever since, and thus you see I am brought to the moment when, and the reason why, General de Miribel and I are availing ourselves of the enforced imprisonment to write to our wives ! If the weather continues bad, and the manœuvres are not of a more interesting kind than to-day, I shall be glad when the thing is over. To-morrow, for example, is said to be *relâche*, and what on earth we are to do I know not. It is 40 versts to Narva, too far for an excursion, and the country all around is as flat as Salisbury Plain, and when you have seen one Russian village you have seen all. *Apropos* of Russian villages, it was rather interesting this morning to observe the people of the village

where we mounted our horses (about four miles off) assembled to welcome the Czar, with their headman in front bearing an offering of bread and salt, which was duly presented. The people seem happy in a sort of way ; and give no evidence of being discontented with their present mode of life. My two companions are attached to the headquarters of the contending forces, and are lodged six or seven miles off ; I saw them to-day for a short time. Colonel Trench is with me at headquarters. According to present plans we move the day after to-morrow to Ropscha, a small country palace nearer to Krasnoe, and shall be there till the manœuvres close, the 26th. Then I am told we are to be taken to Peterhoff, and so conclude our mission. After breakfast this morning, I had a talk with a Mr Heath, who is English tutor to the Grand-Duc Héritier, and he at once asked me if I did not live near Marlow. "I was born," he said, "within half a mile of your house." I was able to give him the latest news. How small the world is, when one thinks that, after a journey of 1000 miles and more, one tumbles upon a man born within half a mile of one's own door !¹

ROPSCHA, Aug. 23, 1884.

We arrived here this afternoon from Gomontovo, from which place I wrote to you two days ago. It was most unlucky that it should have rained at Gomontovo, for yesterday was a holiday, and we were dreadfully bored with each other, not knowing what to do. We managed a short ride to look

¹ I was very glad to hear afterwards from his Majesty and the Empress of the high opinion they entertained of Mr Heath, and it is pleasant to think of an English gentleman being intrusted with the early education of the young Grand-Dukes.

at some of the camps and bivouacs ; but it was not lively work, and as we were doubled up in very small rooms, it was not easy to settle down to writing. I went with Detaille to a village close by, where he made a sketch out of his carriage ; but even his skill did not enable him to do much. We breakfasted and dined always with the Emperor and Empress, and consequently the stiffness of etiquette is becoming less burdensome. To-day we sat down to luncheon after the manœuvres in a pretty pavilion, half-way to this place, which belonged to General Barclay de Tolly, and we were only twelve at the Imperial table out in the verandah. The laughing and chaffing was enough to set every one at ease ; and I must say, nothing can be more perfect than the manner of the Emperor and Empress towards each other and their two sons. If ever people deserved to be happy, they should be so. The manœuvres to-day were more interesting ; and as the rain had left us and the sun vouchsafed to shine, the day's work was enjoyable.

We took leave of our host and hostess at Gomontovo, Baron and Baroness Veglio, who had done their best for us small people as well as their Imperial guests, and now we are in one of the palaces or country-houses, 12 versts from Peterhoff, and really a very fine *chateau* it is ! It has an unfortunate legend attached to it, for it was here that the Empress Catherine II. caused her husband, Peter III., to be strangled. But no one seems to care much about such matters. Our dinner-party has been more stately in consequence of the palatial resources ; and the Grand-Duchess Constantine and the young Grand-Duchess Constantinowitch, *nee* Saxe-Altenburg,

and recently married, came over to stay here from their country house. I sat next the Grand-Duchess (the bride) and was much pleased by her manner and facility in speaking *all* languages.

There is a trout-stream just in front of the palace entrance, and as we had a couple of hours before dinner waiting for our luggage, I got an old hook and line and *float* from the lodge-keeper, and with a bit of *old* fish for a bait, I caught four trout in half an hour, half a pound each ! an odd sort of sport, but they *all* mean to do the same thing to-morrow. There is a fine lake and park here, which I hope to explore to-morrow, as there is *relache* on account of Sunday.

Sunday, 10 A.M.—A roughish night, the wind howling ; but the sun is breaking through the clouds, and we are just starting, by the invitation of H.M., for the church hard by, where we shall have the orthodox service. I have been walking about the country this evening.

ROPSCHA, *Aug. 25, 1884.*

To-morrow ends our manœuvres, and I hope to be at St Petersburg next day, and start on the following for Moscow. We have had daily manœuvres since, except on Sunday, when we went to the High Mass at the little church hard by, and nothing could be more impressive than the singing. I am quite in raptures with their church music. The effect is indescribable, unless you can understand the triumph of harmony when voices only are employed. The Emperor and Empress and their sons seem very devout, and that, too, without affectation of any kind. I have not fished since my first day's efforts ; but others have, and I stood by the Grand-Duke Nicholas while he caught fifteen trout. In the

lake, which is very extensive and picturesque, there were no end of pike and perch, and I watched the young Czarowitch and his brother hooking in perch at a great rate. The heir-apparent is a very nice-looking lad, and like his mother's family. I have twice sat next the young Grand-Duchess Constantine, who has very pretty and pleasant ways—speaks English, and talks very naturally. To-night I was honoured after dinner by a very long conversation with the Empress, who asked after all my family, the names of my children, besides making many inquiries about people she knew in England. She expressed a wish to see me again before I returned to England, after my visit to Moscow, and asked for my photograph. All this went on in the large *salon*, with the "circle" standing behind, and no one in the middle but myself.

On Sunday all the Ministers came down with their portfolios, and each had his audience, and then they joined us at dinner. The *al fresco* luncheons at the manœuvres are more amusing, because there is less restraint. To-day we had luncheon in a pretty garden, the table arranged for the Imperial party and the generals, and the others stood about at various rustic buffets. There was a great deal of fun, and the sun shone, and the band of the Chevalier Garde played "Loublow" arranged for solo performers, and the Emperor passed his cigarettes to all of us. This was after we had been five hours on horseback, besides driving for two hours, so we had earned our repast. Prince Windischgrätz and I rode a long distance through the forest to watch a turning movement of the opposing (or invading) forces.

We have such a host of generals and aides-de-camp here that it is

impossible to single out any name; but I find General von Werder, the German aide-de-camp to the Emperor, very kind and friendly—and the Prince of Oldenberg, General Demidoff, and the young Stackelberg, so well known in England, cordial and agreeable.

To-night they are distributing decorations wholesale; my French colleague is engaged at this moment with his servant sewing on the Grand Cordon of St Anne. They all admit that our English rule, under which no officers are allowed to accept such decorations, is the true one; and I think you would have been ashamed of my wearing a grand cordon, or any other cordon, not earned on active service in the field. I never saw such people for stars and medals. Some are literally smothered with them, and, with the exception of the Cross of St George, none have any value to a soldier.

We start to-morrow at 7.30, and fight our way to Krasnoe Seló, where we sheathe our swords and say good-bye to our soldier friends.

HOTEL DE L'EUROPE, ST PETERSBURG,
Aug. 27, 1884.

The sudden death of Lord Ampt-hill, the announcement of which I saw in the 'St Petersburg Journal' last night, would alone prevent my returning *via* Berlin, as I could not go to the Grand Parade, so I have decided to return by Stockholm. I go to-morrow to Moscow, and shall stay till Sunday night or Monday morning, according to weather.

Our manœuvres terminated yesterday very happily; a bright sun and cool air helped to keep every one in good humour. We were off early, 7.30, from Ropscha, and were kept waiting a long while by the Imperial party at the rendez-vous, so that I was really six

hours on horseback. The concentration of the two *corps d'armee* made the work far more interesting, and the final attack and repulse of the invaders were grand and picturesque in the extreme. No fewer than 50,000 men were engaged, and all the 120 guns were brought into action. The Empress as usual rode, and was joined towards the end by the Grand-Duchesses and other ladies in carriages. At two we had an out-of-door luncheon at a kind of farm, where, in the orchard, tables were laid out, and a general scramble of hungry officers ensued; at the Imperial table alone had we chairs. Previous to the luncheon 600 cadets were paraded, and received their commissions in a short speech from the Emperor. I need hardly say their cheers were long and loud, and the sight of the young faces, radiant on the receipt of the word from the Czar that "he claimed them as his officers," was pleasant to see. After luncheon, one of the old generals came behind the Emperor's chair, and called to all around to drink to the health of the Czar. Off went caps, and a grand hurrah resounded, the peasants standing in their brightly coloured dresses beyond the orchard enclosure taking up the shout, and even the cooks working at the open-air kitchens joining in the cheer. Then a few words from the Emperor, and more cheering; then the Empress's health, and still louder hurrahs, and so the scene closed. A few words of compliment to the generals who commanded on either side, and then we strangers formed in line and received the parting words of the Imperial family. I had already had so much said to me by the Emperor and the Empress that I was content to kiss the Empress's hand and accept her

Majesty's kind words of adieu, as sincerely as I believe they were kindly meant. Probably I shall see her again, as I told you in my last letter. The Princess of Hanover was more than kind, for she over and over again joined with the young Grand-Duchess Constantine in expressing her hope we might meet again ere long.

Then came the hand-shaking with generals and others; and my old friend Lubowidski (General) fairly put both arms round my neck and hugged me tight. "Shall we ever meet again?" were his last words; and I believe he really was in earnest in hoping it might be so, before we have to give an account of our battles and service before a mightier King than the Czar.

And so at a gallop to Krasnoe, where we found a special train, and reached St Petersburg at six. As some of our party go away to-day, we had a deal of toast-making and friendly converse at our *dîner d'adieux*, Prince Windischgrätz, as our *doyen*, being spokesman. Just before dinner, General von Richter, the head of the Emperor's military staff, came to my room, bearing a very handsome flagon of enamelled silver, a present to me from the Emperor, who had sent him off the field after the luncheon to execute his orders to buy this as my souvenir. I am not likely to forget his Majesty's gracious expression of goodwill or this act of condescension.

HOTEL DE L'EUROPE, ST PETERSBURG.
Friday, Aug. 29.

My last letter, sent on the 27th, brought me to the time when General von Richter brought me this flagon which the Emperor had sent. I had intended leaving for Moscow last night; but I had a short visit to the Hermitage in

the morning with Prince Windischgrätz, who was going off at mid-day to Cracow, and then we (the remainder) were bound for Peterhoff in the afternoon, so that by 5.30, when I returned, I felt disinclined for a night-journey, and so remained on for another day. To-day I propose to have another look at the Hermitage, and to go off at 8 p.m. to Moscow with Captain Davidson. Colonel Low starts for England to-day, as he has business, and takes this letter with him as he travels through.

I am perfectly amazed at the treasures of the Hermitage, and could spend a week easily in the examination and study of them. Pictures, statues, antiquities, the Kertch collection, and gems, fill room after room of this immense palace, and all is admirably arranged. Raphael is represented by four or five masterpieces, among which the "Vierge de la Maison d'Albe" is perhaps the best known. A lovely Fra Angelico has lately been added. The collection of jewels and gold ornaments obtained by excavation at Kertch is marvellous, proving that nothing is new under the sun; for the designs of rings, bracelets, necklaces, &c., are absolutely the same as those now in vogue, though executed in far finer workmanship.

Peterhoff and its gardens and park are well worth a visit. The palace is not inhabited, but remains much as it was in Catherine's time, though balls and parties are occasionally given in it. The gardens are in the Versailles style, and the water-works which we saw will bear *very* favourable comparison with those at Versailles. The park goes down to the sea, and is well laid out in trees, and walks, and little lakes. The Emperor and

Empress live in a small *château* in the grounds hard by: and this seems to be the custom, as they thus have more liberty and less of Court ceremony.

At this moment they are on board the Imperial yacht, looking at the naval manœuvres at Cronstadt. We dined at six, and there was a deal of speechifying of an effusive kind, and I had to speak, of course. It always seems to fall to me. They say I spoke properly; but French is a bad language for an improvised oration. The weather is lovely, and I trust it may remain so while we are at Moscow.

Moscow,

Saturday, Aug. 30, 1884.

We arrived here at 10.30 this morning after a successful journey, leaving St Petersburg at 8.30 last night. We were accompanied to the station by Colonel Tchitchakoff and Count Stenbock, and many and hearty were the adieux. By their advice we (Davidson and I) took a sleeping-compartment to ourselves, and I am glad of it, as we were as comfortable as if in a room. You know I cannot sleep in the train, but *he* did; and I rested myself somehow, and do not feel done up, though I have already seen a great deal of Moscow.

We are lodged in a hotel called the Sabiansky Bazaar, in the Kitai or Chinese town. A bath and a good breakfast, and then we started to the Kremlin with an English *laquais de place*, having taken a carriage for the afternoon. Unluckily the weather has changed, and instead of the heat we were told we should experience, the cold has been intense, and we have to take every precaution to avoid catching a chill. All attempt at describing the Kremlin would fail, unless page after page were filled

with details: old walls with rugged and quaint parapets, flanked by towers at the angles, each tower a truncated cone with grotesque dome or minaret; ponderous gates which lead to a vast area, on the summit of which stand the three old churches, that of the Assumption, the Annunciation, and the Archangel Michael, the Tower of Ivan dominating all; also on the highest part of the hill is the great palace, ugly enough in its modern architecture, but really magnificent inside. Each of these churches has five or six domes, besides minarets or turrets; these are all gilt, and glow in the sunlight with marvellous effect. The roofs of the other buildings are generally of a bright green, so there is no lack of colour. We *did* the three churches, and noted well the scene of the coronation of the czars, the tombs of the saints. The whole history of John the Terrible and his son Alexis comes beside one vividly as one stands beside their tombs; and every step of the "red" staircase which leads from the Church of the Assumption to the palace, could tell a tale of horror of the barbaric interest which would fill volumes. The great hall of St George in the palace is very grand in its white simplicity. Adjoining is the hall of St Alexander Nevsky, all gold; and beyond, those of St Andrew and St Catherine. Then there is the old part of the palace, where the Czar Alexis lived, connected with the more modern part of it, and full of objects of interest.

At 6.30 (Sunday 31st) we went to hear the evening service at the new Cathedral of St Sauveur. This grand church has just been completed, and it is certainly the grandest modern sacred edifice I have ever seen. It was begun in

1812 to commemorate the expulsion of the French, and has thus been seventy years in course of construction. Porphyry, marble, mosaic, gold, and painting all combine, and the general effect is delightful. As for the choir, what shall I say? No words can express the charm of those long-drawn-out chords: every voice clear and distinct, yet harmony preserved under all conditions, and time absolutely faultless. If our choirmasters were to come here for a month's training, they would *begin* to know what church music ought to be. In the great dome is a grand painting filling the whole space, representing the First Person of the Trinity, a bold undertaking, but, I am bound to add, successful. We have seen a fine collection of the works of Vereschagine, a Russian artist of note, and are now going off to the Petroffsky Palace.

SABIANSKY BAZAAR HOTEL,
MOSCOW, Sept. 1, 1884.

The weather has changed decidedly for the worse, and to-day we have had rain nearly all day. The vice-consul has been to see me, and has accompanied me to one or two shops. We have had a good look at the treasury, where there is a most interesting collection of historical objects—crowns, arms, captured standards, plate (the gift of various foreign sovereigns), coronation chairs, robes, &c.—down to the most recent date, so that you can behold in a glass case the coronation dress of the present Emperor and Empress. All Catherine's II.'s old clothes seem to have found a home here, her saddles (she rode *en cavalier*), and her carriages and sleighs. The barbaric splendour of the jewelled crowns is very striking, and the veneration for personal relics of great sovereigns is a noteworthy trait

in the Russian national character. Then we went to the old church of St Basil, which is more remarkable for its quaint exterior than for anything inside it; then luncheon; and then, in spite of the threatening rain, we clambered to the top of the Tower of Ivan, and were rewarded by a practical lifting of the clouds and the grandest panoramic view of Moscow. The churches are innumerable, and as their domes and cupolas are almost always gilded or painted some bright colour, the city is as it were lighted up by those bright spots amid the vast maze of green roofs. The Moskowa river winds gracefully through the town, passing close to the foot of the Kremlin Hill; but it is a sluggish and useless stream, not navigable for anything but a wood barge or float.

At the foot of the Ivan Tower lies the great bell—the broken piece being carefully preserved. We passed out by the arsenal gate, where are collected in a long row all the guns left behind by and captured from the French in the campaign of 1812.

And thus our visit to Moscow closes. There is more to be seen, no doubt; but we have taken in as much as we can well hold. I think we should have done wrong to have left Russia without seeing its ancient capital, so different is it in every respect from St Petersburg.

The railway journeys are so distasteful to me, that I prefer the idea of breaking them by the trip to Sweden, to that dreary fifty hours' train to Berlin.

LIGOVA, near ST PETERSBURG,
Sept. 4, 1884.

A letter written at Moscow, but hastily finished with a postscript at St Petersburg, was sent to you

yesterday, and therefore I have not broken the link of our communication by any very long gap.

I am writing in the verandah of Mr Evelyn Hubbard's villa, half-way between St Petersburg and Peterhoff, by whose invitation Davidson and I passed the night here. Mr Hubbard has had to go to the city early on business; but Davidson and I are taking it easy, as we are rather short of sleep. Breakfast is coming, and meanwhile I am enjoying a delightful blaze of morning sun, and looking forward to a spell of fine weather for our journey to Stockholm, which begins to-day at 6 P. M.—at which hour we are to embark at the Nicholas Bridge, and gain our first experience of the Gulf of Finland. We shall halt at Helsingfors and Aboe, and remain four or five hours at each; so we hope to see much that is interesting besides the Åland Islands.

And now for my adventures yesterday.

We had dined, as I told you, with our ambassador, and then walked home and gone to bed about 12.30; and was in a profound sleep, when, at 3 A. M., a soldier appeared at my bedside with a note from Colonel Tchitchakoff to say he had a telegram from Peterhoff, and that the Empress would see me at ten o'clock next day! As I had to get up and answer this, and then ponder as to whether my uniform had been left by Rowland in *complete* order, you may imagine that I did not get much more rest. By eight I was dressed in full fig, and Tchitchakonff came for me. We caught the nine o'clock train, and were at Peterhoff by ten. Driving first to the Chamberlain's—Prince Jean Galitzin—he told me that eleven was the hour for reception, that a room was ready for me, tea, &c., &c.; and a car-

riage, of course, had been sent for me to the station.

The suite live in pavilions and palaces scattered in all directions about the park. The Emperor and Empress live at Alexandrie in a "cottage," with garden and farm attached, and altogether very little larger than an English villa. They like the retirement naturally. After tea and a good toasting before a fire, for it was cold, I drove off to the "cottage," and found myself with four or five ministers and generals in a little ante-room—they were waiting, I think, for the Emperor. I was soon sent for, and most graciously received by her Majesty in her own little room, where, surrounded by flowers and pet dogs, she looked very nice and homely. After a few minutes she said, "Pray come back to luncheon at one o'clock, and you will see the Emperor." I of course bowed acceptance, and went off with Tchitchakoff, who was waiting outside, to see Peter the Great's house and the laboratory for working malachite and other stones, and so passed the time till one, when I returned alone to the "cottage," and found myself in the midst of the family party, Emperor and Empress and *all* the children, Duke of Leuchtenberg (A. D. C. in waiting), Prince and Princess Obolensky, and a dear old lady whose name I could not catch, but who talked to me after luncheon a great deal about General Gordon, in whose career she took much interest. Everything in the arrangements was simple and homely, and the manner in which the children behave to the Emperor and Empress quite perfect. We talked of all sorts of people and places, from the Shah to the street-boys of London. Afterwards a cigarette in the drawing-room and a quiet chat with the Empress about England. She has sent me

a letter to give or send to the Princess of Wales, and then she gave me her photograph; and so I made my bow, kissing her hand, and receiving a very friendly shake from the Emperor,—and so off to the train.

THE BALTIC.

Sept. 8, 1884—Sunday, 12 o'clock.

We hope to be at Stockholm in two hours' time; and as there may be a difficulty about writing when I get ashore, or, at any rate, a chance of my losing a post, I write while we are steaming up this lovely archipelago, through which the latter part of our journey has lain.

I sent you a letter from Helsingfors on Friday night; very likely you will not get that much before this arrives, as it had to go round by St Petersburg. The weather has been most propitious, and the sea perfectly calm. Our voyage to Aboe lay through such a multitude of islands and rocks, that the sight of granite boulders and dwarf pine-trees became at last monotonous. Scarce a habitation to be seen, and those we did see only the huts of fishermen. The entrance to Aboe, however, is very picturesque; and as we closed in on the town, the estuary became only a narrow river, and wharves and quays and timber-yards lined its banks. We passed six hours at Aboe. So we went ashore and saw the old church, and walked to some gardens, and visited the town, dining at a nice little *café* on a wooded hill. The town looks modest and respectable, and has been almost entirely rebuilt, since a great fire which occurred in 1827. Our party has increased by one—Mr Nordenfeldt, of great-gun celebrity, having joined us at Aboe. I knew him formerly, and he is a very agreeable man, besides being a Swede by birth, and therefore

able to give us all kind of information. I gather from him that I cannot possibly be in England by the 10th without great and unnecessary fatigue, so you must not expect me before the 13th. If I should be able to reach home before, I will telegraph to you. We shall, I hope, leave Stockholm Monday night, reach Copenhagen Tuesday, leave Wednesday, go to Hamburg, leaving Hamburg Friday morning for Flushing, and reaching London Saturday morning early. I feel much rested by the sea-voyage, though I do not sleep sound; the weather and *dolce far niente* both serve to set me to rights. The food is decent and the company *mixed*. We have a general, an alderman,¹ a *diplomate*, a naval officer, an inventor of guns (Nordenfeldt), a shooter of guns (Davidson), a doctor, a lawyer, a clergyman, and a maker of agricultural machinery! So there is no lack of variety in the subjects of our conversation. We left Aboe at ten o'clock last night, and steamed across, leaving the Åland Islands on our right, but keeping within sight of them till we entered the Swedish archipelago. We took in forty horses at Aboe, there being a great trade in horses with Sweden.

STOCKHOLM, 2:30.

After a perfectly lovely progress up the gulf and harbour, here we are in one of the best hotels I ever saw; and I do not know that I was ever more impressed by the first appearance of a great city than I am as I look out of my window across the river or estuary at the Royal Palace. The brightest of suns, every one in Sunday costume, steamers (little ones, tell Gladys) flying up and

down, for you can hire them like cabs. I have had a much-desired tub, and we are going to dine at some gardens as the guest of Mr Nordenfeldt, who seems to be all-powerful here. I found your dear letter of the 31st awaiting me, and am quite at ease about you all. Of course I shall write again, but not till I get to Copenhagen; and after that I shall probably travel nearly as fast as my letters.

HOTEL D'ANGLETERRE, COPENHAGEN,
Tuesday, Sept. 9, 1884.

I wrote from Stockholm on Sunday, giving an account of our prosperous journey across the Baltic; and now I can announce our further advance homewards. We arrived here at eleven o'clock this morning, having left Stockholm at six last night. We had a sleeping-berth, so were comfortable enough, though the carriage shook a good deal. I am quite charmed with Stockholm, and wonder much why more people do not go there for their summer holiday—the people are so nice and wholesome-looking, and there is a look of freedom and contentedness which appeals much to our English taste. My friend Mr Nordenfeldt entertained us royally at the summer-garden, where, in addition to the material advantages of a very good dinner, we had a Hungarian band, as well as the band of one of the Guard Regiments. We were in a balcony, and all the *bourgeoisie* of Stockholm were enjoying themselves below in the garden, tea-drinking and beer-drinking, wives and children, men and boys, and all so well-behaved. At the end of dinner, at a hint, I suspect, from Nordenfeldt, the band struck up "Rule Britannia" and "God save

¹ As I correct this for publication I am reminded that "the alderman" was my lamented friend the late Lord Mayor, then apparently in perfect health, and looking forward to his approaching assumption of high office.

the Queen," and the people cheered, and I had to stand up and bow. Luckily it was nearly dark, for I felt rather like a fool. However, I insisted on sending a message to the bandmaster, requesting that he would play the Swedish national air, which by the way, is a very fine hymn. So there was more cheering, and we took a lovely drive by moonlight through the park, which is surrounded by the estuaries or fiords. There is some fine timber, oak trees as well as fine and good ilxes, down to the water's edge.

Yesterday we saw the Museum of Antiquities, full of Scandinavian relics, well arranged according to periods, beginning with the Stone or Flint periods. There are many relics too, of the time of Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. In short we left Stockholm with a strong desire to revisit it.

The fine weather continues, and we are much struck with the beauty of this old city. The approach from Malmö, where the railway ends, and where we took ship, is very fine, though not equal to that by which you enter Stockholm from the sea. At breakfast I found at the next table to me Count and Countess Daniskiohl, who recognised me first. We have been to the Thorwaldsen Museum, and to the Antiquities also, so I am rather *done*! but we shall take it easy to-morrow, as we do not start till 7 P.M., and shall be at Hamburg I hope by nine in the morning, and so much nearer you and home. I have been to the Legation and found all your letters. The Vivians are at Elsinore. Lady Rumbold, by the way, was also absent from Stockholm. I see no reason why we should not be in London by Saturday 13th, *via* Flushing.

[In the above letters, all reference to details of professional criticism have been necessarily avoided; but your readers, however indulgent, would be disappointed if I did not allude to the appearance of the Russian troops generally. At the great camp at Krasnoe Seló, which corresponds with our Aldershot, we found 56,000 men of all ranks, of whom at least 40,000 were of the Guard. Nothing can exceed the stately and soldier-like bearing of the *Garde à Cheval* and *Chevalier Garde*, by which names the Household Cavalry are known. They can fairly claim to rival our Life Guards. The infantry soldiers are of large stature, are well fed and cared for in camp and barracks, and their countenances give evidence of contentment, while discipline is easily maintained. The Artillery can boast special claim to notice. The horses, though small, are swift, active, and capable of much endurance; and the gunners proved themselves to be highly instructed, and confident in the value of their rifled guns. No pains were spared, no details neglected; and the value of concentrating large bodies of troops for occasional manœuvres on a large scale, commended itself much to the minds of all the foreign visitors. From the Emperor we received most royal and gracious hospitality; and from the officers generally we experienced the same unvarying cordiality, which made us feel that we were living amongst comrades.

GEORGE W. A. HIGGINSON, Lieut.-General, C.B.]

GLADSTONE SAGACITY UNFOLDING.

LAST month we ventured to say that "Mr Gladstone's Administration must avoid a war with Russia at any price which it may be possible to make this country pay ;" also, that "by the time war is fairly declared, he" (that is Mr Gladstone) "will have been tricked and bullied out of more than the whole stake originally contended for."¹ These predictions have not waited long for their fulfilment. Already the nation has been called upon to pay in money, to pay in territory, and (what is far more grievous) to pay in honour—and for what? for anything that we have enjoyed, for anything that we have acquired, for anything even that we may have said or done? For none of these things ; we have paid simply for the indulgence which prisoners before the judges call "a long day"—for the permission to sneak in servile quiet through a few months, until it shall please our assailant to make fresh demands, and to make us pay afresh for his acquisitions. After all the loss and humiliation to which we have submitted, our position is morally and materially far worse than it was a few weeks since. We have given up what no sensitive nation could possibly have yielded, and we have made that which remains to us immeasurably less secure than it was before.

Our disgrace has been patent to the civilised world. We have suffered in opinion most injuriously, perhaps fatally. The papers published on 16th May, though they do not show the whole, and probably not the worst, part of the

story, condemn our Ministers only too forcibly. We cannot afford—no Power can afford—to pass for recreant and submissive, to pocket up wrongs, without even turning as the worm will turn. So to suffer must in the end bring far worse calamity than resistance would have brought—even than unsuccessful war. The experience of all ages of the world upholds this contention, let sects or sophists prattle as they will.

It is quite admitted that when the matter in dispute may be trifling, when the quarrel may be on the ninth part of a hair, when by yielding a point of minor importance war may be averted and peace secured, then it is wise and generous to bear something more than is our due, to smother some not unreasonable complaint of ours, rather than seek redress by arms. But the predicament in which the British Empire at present stands is in no respect one for a high-minded and generous forbearance. The Empire has been subjected to gross insult. The particular grievance by which we have been last mortified is only one in a long series of such, all menacing to our possessions, all ruinous to our reputation. The breach of a "sacred covenant" to which we have just submitted is only the last of a long line of wrongs,—only a crowning perfidy to those by which Khiva, Merv, and Saraks were occupied by our shameless foe. We must look at the whole schedule of the offences against us before we pronounce upon the magnitude of the question. We must remember that,

¹ Vide *Blackwood's Magazine* for last month—Art., "Curiosities of Politics," section, "The Ministry or the Country: which shall we Save?"

only a few months since, we, according to an arrangement duly made with Russia, sent a commissioner to define, in conjunction with another commissioner whom Russia undertook to send, the northern boundary of Afghanistan; that the Russian commissioner has to this day never appeared upon the ground, though his British compeer waited months for him; that the delay thus caused was used by Russia for bringing up troops, and for partly seizing and for laying claim to a frontier line encroaching farther upon Afghan territory than any that had formerly been in dispute. All this, and not one or even two articles in the list of our complaints, must be taken into account in judging what the real ground of quarrel has been. It can be no accident, no inadvertence by which we have been affronted, for there is evidence that a fixed and cunning scheme of overreaching and jostling us has for years been adhered to with deliberate persistency. To pass over what has been done is to invite farther and deeper indignity; to let the enemy enjoy the fruit of his domineering, is to suffer serious material damage, as well as to incur merited dishonour; to make an agreement with him while he has made no admission or retraction of his outrage, is simple fatuity.

For where is the sane man who can believe that, after what has happened, any compact or treaty which she may sign will withhold Russia from seizing more of Afghan territory whenever she may find it convenient to do so? Her word and her honour have, in this respect, been broken repeatedly; and there is every reason to expect that she will readily break them again. She has laughed at us—treated us with derision as well as violence; and all the nations have

looked on and seen our degradation. How then can we induce her to leave us and our ally in peace? Only by making her respect us; only by so bearing ourselves that she may dread to invade our rights, or to sully our honour. God forbid that we should speak of war as a state to be lightly entered into. But much as war is to be deprecated, there are calamities to which even war is a preferable alternative. Let us remember too, that, humble ourselves as we may, it does not rest with us to say for how long war may be averted. The enemy, when tired with amusing himself at our terrors and our crouchings, will probably decide to exercise us with a little blood-letting, and who is to say him nay?

But the affair is not one (as we have hitherto been considering it) which affects only Russia and the British Empire. The States of Europe witnessing our unreadiness to defend our own, will they not show in their behaviour to us the disrespect which they cannot but feel? And India in all her borders must be influenced by the conduct of the Home Government at this time—that is a capital concern.

We possess and rule India by opinion. The natives, of what class or religion soever, have learned to believe, and to tremble as they think of it, that the arm of Britain stretches powerfully into Asia, and that it is as swift and as certain as it is strong. Surely no oriental has hitherto joined in the same thought the ideas of Britain and vacillation, or of Britain and paltroonery. From the days of Clive to those of Clyde, the natives of Hindustan have been taught in a school which associates the British name with determination and energy, never failing on

occasion, and rising to the heroic where need is. The prompt and warlike spirit it is to which India submits. Can it then be matter of surprise that the conduct of our Government in this contention has filled all the British in India with apprehension and dismay? They understand the native mind full well, and perceive only too painfully the change which must come over it when this chapter of shame and effeminacy shall have wrought its full effect on it. If Britain declines to make a stand against Russia, if the virtue is gone out of her, is it certain that she would oppose a prompt and effectual check to rebellion in India? She is weak in numbers there: if she be wanting, too, in confidence and courage, her rule may be subverted. At any rate, another rising may be thought worth the trial, now that there is some reason to think her craven.

Neither is our love of peace likely to procure peace for us among our neighbours in Europe. The power that is known to have declined to defend her own when set upon, is sure to have plenty of disturbance. Small as well as great will molest her, and try to win reputation, if not material advantage, at her expense. "When a warre-like State," says Bacon, "growes soft and effeminate, they may be sure of a warre. For commonly such States are growne rich, in the time of their degenerating; and so the prey inviteth, and their decay in valour encourageth a warre."

Even if it be true (as some have advanced in our defence) that we accept the insults of Russia because we are at present unprepared to cope with a great Power, yet our reputation will suffer just

the same as if we were faint-hearted until we do something to convince the world that our reluctance to fight proceeded from policy only.

It would thus appear that our position is already pitiable indeed, and that our future is likely to be lower than our present state.

"But what," say the apologists of the Government, "is to happen if it prove that we have been demanding a frontier which the Afghans themselves do not care to have secured to them? To this we answer that we shall then have another testimony to the incapacity and negligence of our Government, but nothing that in the smallest degree lessens the insolence of Russia's conduct towards us. If the Ameer were to say that he would give up the whole of Afghanistan, that would neither atone for past insults accumulated upon us, nor put an end to our demand that Russia should keep her distance. We are parties to this dispute, not simply that the Ameer may be satisfied, but that the way into British India may be barred. Though the Ameer should be content to yield to Russia positions, the possession of which by her would facilitate her invasion of British India, we cannot allow the concession. We have something much more important than the Ameer to think of, though, at the same time, we should be found ready to do our duty by him as long as he stands faithfully by us.

Without holding the nation guiltless as to the weakness and the low esteem into which we have fallen, we may yet lay the blame of it all in the first degree on Mr Gladstone. We accuse him—

1. Of having by his former for-

¹ Bacon's Essay, "Of Vicissitude of Things."

eign policy since 1880 so tarnished the name and fame of the British Empire, and of having so embarrassed the Empire by feeble and meaningless campaigns in Egypt, as to have made ready for, and invited, the injurious action of Russia.

2. Of having, in spite of the plainest warnings of what was coming, neglected to take effectual steps, during the last five years, for defending the north-west boundary of British India; and of having cancelled or destroyed the provisions for defence which had been made by the Government which preceded his.

3. Of having, since he first admitted that the advance of Russia in Central Asia called for interference by our Government, suffered himself to be tricked out of, or rudely driven from, positions which had been taken up in defence of British rights and honour, and which it was his duty to have maintained.

4. Of having scandalously deceived the country by a speech made in Parliament, whereby he made it appear that he was about to make a determined stand against the encroachments and affronts of Russia, yet having in the event made no stand at all, but having made a complete surrender to the enemy.

5. Of having obtained from Parliament a vote of eleven millions of money by false pretences, as shown in article 4.

The things brought to Mr Gladstone's charge in the first article have been often discussed and proved in this Magazine. They are matters of notoriety, and need not, it is presumed, be investigated at present.

As to the second count, it is most grave, and its importance to the nation can hardly be over-rated. Lord Beaconsfield's Government had certainly been alarmed at the rapid advance being made by Russia towards Afghanistan. It had projected for us a military station at Candahar, and had commenced a railway to connect that station with British India, the intention being, of course, to lie within supporting distance of Herat, which is considered by our greatest strategists to be the key of Hindustan. Had the intentions of the late Government been carried out, the crisis which has just occurred with Russia would have been rendered improbable, or, if it had occurred, would have found Great Britain, and not Russia, on the ground of vantage. But what did Mr Gladstone do as soon as he had displaced Lord Beaconsfield and obtained possession of power? He gave up Candahar to the Afghans; he withdrew our forces to the Indus; he stopped the construction of the railway, and sold the rails which had been provided. This proceeding, as one would think, must have been the product of either treason or dementia! Many motives have been assigned for it; but the excuse which Mr Gladstone's friends would probably make for him is, that he was unable to comprehend the extent and proximity of the danger—a view which is supported by the words of Mr Gladstone's own mouth, who said in 1879, "I have no fear myself of the territorial extensions of Russia—no fear of them whatever. I think such fears are only old women's fears."¹ Allowing then, for a moment, that this shows the real reason of Mr Gladstone's in-

¹ We give this quotation on the authority of Colonel Malleson. Lord R. Churchill likewise spoke of the saying at Paddington on 6th May.

sensibility to a most menacing danger, and that he was incapable of understanding the relative positions of the two Powers in Central Asia, what a demonstration does it give us of his sagacity as a statesman, and of his fitness to be intrusted with the interests and resources of this great country!

But Mr Gladstone does not, as is well known, always mean what he says. He may have had many reasons other than disbelief in the danger for making light of Russia's advance and her threatening line of movements. Certain it is that, moved by some perverseness or other, he did neglect, and has neglected, to make provision for our safety and supremacy on the north-western frontier of our Indian empire; and that the quarrel which has so nearly plunged us in a horrid war, which has so severely taxed our resources, and which has defaced our honour, is entirely due to his unfitness for his position. It must be as plain now to the understanding as any part of the future can be, that our peace and our possessions are not safe from day to day while he remains Prime Minister. Though the quarrel with Russia has been the most alarming of his quarrels, it has been by no means the only one; and assuredly, if he should remain in office, it will not be the last. He has shown a genius for getting into hot water with foreign States, which has distinguished him throughout his administration; and this in face of his oft-vaunted doctrine about "the concert of Europe," which sounds much like a sarcasm now. The "crisis" has shown that we have not a single ally to stand by us. And this is the case to which Britain has been brought by Mr Gladstone—Britain who used to lead in the councils of Europe, and

whose alliance was sought by all the nations! Yet so it is. We are avoided; and through most erring guidance we are continually embroiled in some dispute or other. Our late acceptance of insult and wrong will encourage our neighbours to peck at us. We shall have disputing enough; and probably serious losses and humiliations are in store for us unless we put our affairs into more trustworthy hands. Mr Gladstone shouted "hands off" to Austria, who has never given any evidence of why she was so rudely called to order; while to Russia he gave no word of caution, and yet it was in the enforcement of palpable robberies that Russia has just been holding him "in chancery."

The third article requires no proof; only a statement of facts that are notorious and are not denied on either side—namely, that our commissioner waited many months in vain for the Russian commissioner, who was, according to arrangement agreed to by the Russian Government, to meet him; that an agreement concerning the line of frontier was broken, or, as Mr Gladstone put it, "was allowed to lapse"; that a second agreement was not only not observed, but in place of observing it, the Russian troops advanced, attacked and defeated our allies, obliged our commissioner to decamp precipitately, and seized upon a boundary in advance of any that had previously been in question—which boundary, so audaciously and unfairly arrived at, they have been allowed to retain. These facts fully sustain the accusation that our Minister has been tricked out of, or driven from, positions which it was his duty to have maintained.

We come now to the fourth charge concerning Mr Gladstone's

celebrated war speech, by which he persuaded the Parliament and the country that he had screwed his courage to the sticking-place, and that he really meant to make a stand for the honour of the nation. If his words did not absolutely declare that he would have war before surrender, his tones, his manner, his general language, were calculated to convey the idea that he would at length be firm and loyal on our behalf. The sequel of this great display shows that the whole object of it was to procure a money vote; that he never for a moment intended to make a stand for us; that the House of Commons was treated to a studied piece of hypocrisy; and that, once he had obtained the vote which he desired, he proceeded to surrender every point in dispute. His "prave 'orts" produced a momentary effect; but, instead of their being followed by brave acts, the next utterance to the Russian was, "Quiet thy cudgel; thou dost see I eat." Possibly there may come, if some temporary purpose demand it, yet another change of his mood, when we may hear the awful threat, "All hell shall stir for this!"

No one in the whole country, as we believe, doubts that the eleven millions of money were voted by Parliament under the strong delusion, created by Mr Gladstone, that they were to be spent in maintaining Britain's rights and upholding her honour. Rights and honour were thrown over after the vote was secured. If ever money was obtained on false pretences this vote of eleven millions was so obtained. Mr Gladstone raised a false belief and benefited by it: he knows that he did so.

We have not the least doubt that he is the main cause of the losses and troubles over which we

have to lament. His folly with regard to the Transvaal emboldened Arabi to try his luck in Egypt. His feeble and unmeaning vacillations in Egypt convinced Russia that the time had come for making her spring in India. And she was right. Every year that he remains in power this country becomes involved in more serious complications. We cannot predict what the next "affair of dishonour" may be, but, according to the law which has hitherto prescribed his course, it will be more damaging and more dangerous than even his retreat before Russia. And this is a consideration which intimately concerns the country. It may either wait supinely for his next difficulty, or it may relieve itself of these alarms by simply turning him out. Which will it do? On the attitude of our countrymen we propose now to say a few words.

The betrayal of our interests by Mr Gladstone's Government may be accounted for; but it is very hard to understand how the country while knowing how unworthily the Ministers of the Crown were acting, should have remained so patient. The people could, if they had so pleased, have made their voices heard in prohibition of the dastardly retreat that was made before the overbearing audacity of Russia, and they have chosen to remain passive. While such is their attitude, they are guilty of suicidal negligence and indifference. They have lost no territory as yet, but they have lost reputation. They have commenced to retreat before the most grasping and unscrupulous Power of modern times; and every backward step which they may take will make the effort of facing round again and withstanding the enemy more difficult. The leaps and bounds by which Russia has been advancing of late

years have been so gigantic as to outstrip the calculations of even the most apprehensive observers of her progress. It may be with the utmost confidence predicted that she will make a fresh seizure within a few months, if not weeks. And we have not only declined the combat for the present, but we are making no adequate preparation for defending ourselves at a future time.

Of course, if the great body of our countrymen would rather lose India than strike a blow in its defence, it is a waste of words to say more on the subject: India must go. But it would be well if, before folding the hands and resigning themselves to such a surrender, they should reflect upon the consequences of it. The contraction of an empire like ours cannot but be accompanied by severe impoverishment and depression in the United Kingdom. We have almost ceased to be agricultural, and we have become a manufacturing and a trading people. The closing to us of a great mart, and of a field in which a huge section of our race has hitherto found employment, even though it come by degrees, must prove a fearful calamity, and one which will for years go on increasing. The aspiration of our people at home, especially of our industrial classes, is manifestly at present to become richer, and to enjoy more of the comforts of life: how would the straitening of employment and the loss of national wealth sort with this? How many thousands of us, in each generation, obtain occupation in India itself! These would find little or no outlet in that direction, once that India should be subject to a foreign Power. Our *employés*, civil and military, would be thrown on the world in large numbers in such a case, and how should we be

straitened in finding posts for them? Besides this, we have enormous property in India, as railroads, docks, harbours, forts, all of which will be torn from us with the soil in which they have been constructed.

And probably the loss of India will not be our only loss. A nation which evinces an unreadiness to defend its possessions is sure to be attacked: it is the hug of the bear to-day, but it will be the heels of the ass anon; and with so many outlying dependencies as appertain to us, it will be strange if we are left to own them in peace. If we are too apathetic to defend them, there are poor and rising peoples, vigorous and enterprising as Britons once were, who will make no scruple of taking them from our keeping. Our good neighbours will take care that we are not burdened with properties for the retention of which we do not think it worth while to raise a finger.

The people should lay to heart the truth that, independently of the great calamities which inevitably follow pusillanimous policy, poltroonery is in itself expensive. The country is being heavily taxed this year—partly, no doubt, to meet Egyptian expenses; but in a great degree, as Ministers themselves admit, on account of the dispute with Russia. Now we have not gone to war with Russia; we have surrendered to Russia all that was in dispute; for what then, have we paid the money? The only possible answer is that, badly as we have fared in the negotiation, we should have fared much worse if we had not made some pretence of arming. We pay for this pretence. So that we have proof brought to the door of every taxpayer that dishonourable surrender does not even answer the sordid

purpose which its advocates declare that it will effect. We do not save our pockets. We do not pursue industry and commerce without detriment. For all our operations are in a degree paralysed by the heavy public burdens to which we are subjected. Be it remembered, too, that the dispute with Russia is not settled : it may reopen again at any moment, and then the money we have spent will be seen to have been utterly wasted.

Britain has rarely been so friendless as she is at present. A stout ally might have made our position with regard to Russia far more favourable than it is, notwithstanding our unreadiness to fight. But no nation stands by us. And this desolation is clearly owing to the incapacity of our Government, which has managed to alienate all Europe.

We have no hesitation in saying, and few persons, as we believe, will be found ready to deny, that if we had had a Conservative Government, the complication with Russia would never have arisen. The question, whose shadow was cast long before, would have been provided against and disposed of before collision was imminent ; a firm tone would have been maintained by our Cabinet from the first ; there would have been no threat of war, for the enemy would have understood that we were not to be trifled with ; and there would have been nothing to pay. What, then, is the advantage of having at the head of affairs Mr Gladstone and his diversely minded Cabinet ? We should like very much to understand what the people have gained by setting up this Ministry. The question has been asked before in this Magazine, but not amid the same circumstances. For we have at length to pay eleven millions

for wars and rumors of wars, and the shadow of a bloody war is still upon us. Thus is put the last touch of ridicule to the picture of peace and light burdens which it was the mission of this evangelical Administration to bestow on us ! It is impossible but that in time the money drain must cause a change in the public sentiment ; but we would like the change to come before the drain has advanced further. It is far more satisfactory to save the money than to avenge the loss of it.

Flattering tales are pleasant to listen to. Conservatives will not tell flattering tales, the truth of which they cannot certainly warrant. Therefore they are put aside for men who will recklessly prophesy smooth things. But this is a time for judging sensibly of such matters. Are flattering tales, such as Mr Gladstone invented by the volume at Mid-Lothian, worth the price which we now find that we have to pay for them ? That is for the country to decide ; but we should say that the tales are dear at the money.

Neither are we the only persons who so think. It is plain that the friends of the Administration see how little claim it has left upon the confidence of the country, for they have altered the tone of their platform oratory. They have ceased to trumpet the merits of the trebly convicted Cabinet—ceased, indeed, to say much of the Cabinet at all ; but, instead of the old boasts and promises, they tell us that a Liberal Government is the only possible one—meaning, we opine, that the Conservative party is too much divided to be able to govern at all. Now this is mere nonsense. There is, properly speaking, no difference of opinion among Conservatives as to how the country should be gov-

earned: there may have been a tactical divergence as to the mode of delivering attacks on the Ministry. This will disappear as the prospect of the party being called to office draws nearer. Our veterans will perceive that it is absolutely necessary to prepare a second line of warriors who may step into their places by-and-by; and they will admit to their more intimate councils the younger aspirants who have already won their spurs and proved themselves worthy of high trust. Once they are allowed to plan as well as to fight, our rising paladins will, we doubt not, evince no symptom of division. The party will be ready whenever the country may call on it.

Mr Gladstone's troubles rendered him a little fretful on the 18th May, and his humour discharged itself in wrath at the interruptions and indications of feeling coming from the Opposition. Is it possible that Mr Gladstone can have forgotten the behaviour practised by the great Liberal party when

they were in opposition some eight or ten years ago? Then it was that party violence and party spite were first allowed to disturb the decorum of the House of Commons; and anything of the kind which may seem objectionable to-day is directly descended from the licence of Mr Gladstone's own friends. As Sir John Falstaff said to Master Gower: "If these manners become us not, he was a fool that taught them to us."

The people can undoubtedly put a stop to the misconduct of affairs, which is ruining and distressing us at home, and laying us open to the most galling sarcasms from other nations. The deliverance rests with themselves. If they will not rouse themselves to the effort necessary for displacing the mischievous men who are causing all this shame and loss, they may rely on it that calamities, far greater than we have yet had to bear, will be our portion in the time which is shortly to come.

IRISH FEELING.—1885.

'Twas different in Forty-Eight,
But Irish Virtue's out of date;
And Irish Feeling's kept alive
Another way in Eighty-Five.
'Twas then a lofty aspiration
Might well beseem a moral Nation:
King, Lords, and Commons—hearth and throne,—
And every man secured his own:
'Tis now one class's selfish sense
Of sordid gain in pounds and pence
Abstracted from another's purse
By vulgar arts of fraud and force,—
By murders, houghings, perjuries,

Avowed chicane, and filthy lies
 Told, shameless, of the pure and good
 By whom the course of crime's withstood.
 But how can slandering and stealing,
 You ask me, foster Irish Feeling?
 Or how can private wrongs be meant
 To win us back our Parliament,
 Were gaining *that* were but to put
 Our fortunes at the wronger's foot?
 Not meant at all, good faith: the aim
 Is lucre in a sacred name
 Made use of as a market-cry
 To bring in custom—and throw by.
 But, haply, when the market's over,
 The empty dealers will discover
 'Twas violation of the laws
 Of morals that undid their cause.

The Northern Orangeman, though still
 A narrow bigot, if you will,
 And still, while all for Union, prone
 To think the English half alone
 Should rule the whole o' the joint dominions,
 And he, in right of his opinions
 Concerning Faith and Gospel light
 And farmsteads of the Canaanite,
 Be kept, by orthodox selection,
 To garrison the subject section—
 Though English floutings and rebuffs
 And home constabulary cuffs
 Be all the wages that he gets—
 Yet does his best to pay his debts,
 Stands to his contracts loyally,
 Respects his betters, scorns the lie,
 And oft as, in the vile intrigue,
 Solicited to join a League,
 And cheat his landlord, to the gang
 Makes answer, like a man, "Go hang!"

Come what come may—and who can tell?—
 I love the honest fellow well,
 But—pr'ythee do not take it ill—
 Love erring Ireland better still.

THE LOSING GAME.

ONCE more Mr Gladstone has surrendered. There is no other construction to be placed upon the announcements made in Parliament on the 11th and 12th of last month that her Majesty's Ministers had come substantially to an agreement on the Afghan Frontier controversy which was satisfactory to the Governments of England, Russia, and India, and that the future of the Central Asian question was to be committed to the security of a Convention. For once in her history Great Britain sees the cloud of war roll by without a sense of relief, and with ominous misgivings as to how and when the storm that is sure to follow will break. We now understand that the rôle which our Government has been enacting face to face with Russia, with the Powers of Europe looking scrutinisingly on as spectators, has been strictly a dramatic one. The part of Bob Acres pleases us excellently well on the stage, but when played in real life it produces less agreeable impressions. Introduced into the drama of high politics, upon the *denouement* of which the fates of great nations are made to turn, the character altogether loses its humour amid the tragic environments of the situation. "Tell 'em you never saw me in such a rage before—a most devouring rage,—that I am called in the country Fighting Bob—I generally kill a man a week," says Mr Gladstone to the British Ambassador at St Petersburg; and presently we have the usual sequel: "Look'ee Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word coward: but if you had called me a poltroon, odds dag-

gers and balls——!" We cannot laugh at such a climax; the laugh belongs to the winning side.

Until recent times, at all events, brag and bluster never formed the policy of a British Government. If we erred, it was in the opposite extreme of a word and a blow, and the blow usually first. We certainly have not fallen into the latter mistake on the present occasion: when we have before us in full detail—not in misleading selections—the history of the negotiations that have been recently going on with the Russian Government, we shall be able to judge whether or not we have been practising the meaner expedient.

For nearly two months have England and Russia been facing each other on the brink of war, bandying hostile words, as it were, before the cannon's mouth. So many arguments arose out of the controversy, so many side-issues presented themselves, that both parties have been in danger of losing sight of the original cause of quarrel. Only one thing seemed certain, which was, that so utterly opposed were the aims and interests of the disputants, that a peaceful settlement was beyond possibility; and to support such a belief, the mutual wrangling was carried to the point of placing two great nations in arms, and of unsettling the whole of Europe and three-fourths of Asia. Then when the moment arrived in which a decisive step must be taken, Europe was startled, not by a proclamation of war, but by the announcement that England had made up her mind to accept the situation in which the quarrel was commenced, and to commit the future to the

faith of Russia, we ourselves having to find the guarantees for that unstable quality. Truly we may say, as Baron Brunnow said upon another memorable occasion, "*Ce n'est pas de la diplomatie, c'est de la polissonnerie.*"

Mr Gladstone, we hold, has wantonly sacrificed both the honour and dignity of this country, in giving both Russia and Europe to understand that he was prepared to make the presence of the Russians on the Heri-Rud and Murghab rivers a *casus belli*, unless they could submit proof to the Commission appointed to determine the subject, that they were occupying territory which did not belong to our ally the Ameer of Afghanistan. This is the point at issue, and this point the Government has surrendered. We had appointed a Commission to try the matter on the spot; and we had the best guarantee, in the character of Sir Peter Lumsden, that the delimitation would be conducted in a thorough, intelligent, and just fashion. Russia from the outset threw every obstacle in the way of the Commission. She found a host of excuses for evading her agreement to co-operate with the Commissioner. She had pushed forward so as to be able to take up a commanding position on the debatable land before Sir Peter Lumsden's arrival. She would enter into no negotiations on the spot. She threw out insinuations against the honour of the Commissioner, and the honesty of our aims. In fact she saw at a glance that the case would go against her if tried on the debatable ground, where clear and distinct evidence would be forthcoming; and made up her mind to have the *venue* changed to London, where she could better work upon the weakness and ignorance of Ministers by

astute envoys of the Lessar type, and upon their timidity by show of military preparations, than by attempting to either bully or cajole a brave and straightforward officer like Sir Peter Lumsden. The conduct of the Gladstone Cabinet showed that Russia had read its disposition aright. The frontier question was transferred to London; and though for decency's sake Mr Condie Stephen was called home to advise the Government, the main points in dispute were settled by M. Lessar's assistance before his arrival, after a journey the celerity of which has probably never been equalled in the annals of travelling.

Thus Russia has gained her chief end, that the positions occupied by her should be settled upon the reputable testimony of M. Lessar and the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' instead of by such evidence as might be laid before Sir Peter Lumsden. But as is usual in such disputes, the bitterness engendered found vent in various side-issues, which it was very convenient for Russia to raise, in order to distract attention from her main aim. To some of these we must very briefly allude. No sooner had Russia assented to the Delimitation Commission, than General Komaroff and Colonel Alikhanoff began to push forward outposts along both the Caspian and Balkh roads to Herat; and by the time of Sir Peter Lumsden's arrival in November last, they had occupied Pul-i-Khatun, which commanded the one, and had appeared before Penjdeh, which is the key of the other. It appears now that about the time of Sir Peter Lumsden's arrival, Colonel Alikhanoff made a first demonstration against Penjdeh, and endeavoured to bully the Afghan governor into surrendering the town. On the Heri-Rud side the Russians pressed for-

ward, and had occupied Zulfikar by the time that the British Ministry had fully grasped the alarming nature of the situation, and had made representations at St Petersburg which led to more guarded conduct on the part of General Komaroff.

What sort of counsel did the Government on its part give to the Commissioner amid the trying circumstances in which he found himself placed? It was reported, on good authority, that instructions were sent to him to organise a defence of the Afghan frontier; and if this was the case, some explanation is necessary with regard to our treatment of the British officers who were present at the action of 18th March, and whose credit seems to have been slightly dealt with in our controversy with Russia regarding that affair. Then he was told that he must do his best to keep the Afghans from advancing: and when he replied that this was impossible, and asked for further orders, Lord Granville telegraphed back an assurance of "full support." It must strike every one that the recent Afghan blue-books do not tell the whole story of the Government's instructions to the Commission, and that we must wait for Sir Peter Lumsden's return to get at the truth. However, the Governments, both of Great Britain and India, were thoroughly aroused; military preparations were begun in both countries with a degree of ostentation which rarely heralds serious warfare; and it was notorious that the Russian garrisons, which had been increased along the Krasnovodsk-Sarakhs line during October-February 1884-85, were now being swelled to an effective footing by drafts from the Caucasus and from across the Caspian.

On March 13th Mr Gladstone

made a statement in the House of Commons that the controversy regarding the settlement of the Afghan frontier had not yet reached such a point on both sides that the matter could be said to be exhausted, and that an agreement had been made, "for diplomatic purposes," that neither party should advance farther. The Premier declined to say whether this agreement was of a temporary or a permanent character, but it would last "as long as there was occasion for it,"—a Gladstonian utterance that called forth not very comfortable laughter from honourable members. This statement was based upon a series of telegrams, the last being dated 5th March. To make assurance doubly sure, the Cabinet telegraphed to St Petersburg, after Mr Gladstone had made this declaration, to ask whether the communications made really warranted the construction that had been put upon them, thus affording the Russian Government an early intimation of the timidity and irresolution with which it had to deal. Next day this statement was qualified, on the authority of the Czar's Ministers, by information that the Russian advance would not take place, unless for "some extraordinary reason—say disturbances at Penjdeh,"—a proviso the saving nature of which soon became obvious. Thus, instead of the "agreement" which Mr Gladstone at first thought he had got hold of, we had only an "arrangement." Orders had, we were assured, been issued from St Petersburg enjoining the Russian commandants on the debatable land to avoid provoking a collision; but, as it subsequently turned out, less than the usual care in matters of such importance was taken at St Petersburg to ensure these instructions reaching their proper destination in time to be of any use.

This negligence was all the more culpable that the Russian Government had apparently been informed by telegram of General Komaroff's desire to attack Penjdeh. Under the temporary sedative of this arrangement a lull was produced on both sides; the Russian press for a little laid aside its warlike tone, and employed the interval in urging the mutual advantages of Russia being allowed to rest upon an "ethnographical frontier." But the great question with both parties—was Afghan territory to remain inviolable, and the frontier to be at once carefully delimited on the spot?—was rapidly being lost sight of by the British Government, amid the incessant diplomatic diversions which MM. De Giers and De Staal were keeping up to distract its interest.

That the subject of frontier delimitation was, however, not wholly lost sight of, may be inferred from Mr Gladstone's statement on 24th March, that the Russian answer had not yet been received to a communication made ten days previously which would bring to issue the question whether the frontier was to be settled by inquiry on the spot or by negotiations in London, where M. Lessar was doing his best to plead the Russian cause through the press and at public meetings. Russia did not want to go to Herat, said M. Lessar, just as no less an authority than his Majesty the Czar had assured Lord Dufferin six years before that there was no intention of Russian troops advancing to Merv,—an assurance to which the usual saving clause was hastily supplied by M. de Giers, that "under different circumstances and in view of unforeseen contingencies, the occupation of Merv might become necessary." We may assume that it was not without reluctance that the Gladstone Government

found itself being successfully manipulated by the Russian Government on the frontier question, for military preparations on a great scale were ordered in India, and movements for concentrating forces at Quetta and Pishin were pushed on. Not to force the hands of the British Government too much, or to reveal her fixed determination to prevent any inquiry being made on the spot, before she had secured the positions on which her mind was set, Russia amused us with a rumour that General Zelanoy was to commence work with Sir Peter Lumsden as soon as the negotiations with London had resulted in a "preliminary settlement" of the subjects in dispute. But even at this time, towards the end of March, with Herat practically lying within the grasp of Russia if she chose to put forth her hand and seize it, there were unquestionable signs that the Gladstone Government was yielding; and its surrender would unquestionably have come much sooner, but for an untoward incident which aroused a momentary flash of resolution, only to result in more complete humiliation and failure.

When Parliament adjourned for the Easter recess on 31st March, the Government was still unable to afford any information regarding the course of negotiations. All that was known was that Russia was still pressing for "a preliminary understanding" on certain matters—generally understood to be that Penjdeh and Zulfikar should be exempted from the delimitation inquiry—and which Mr Gladstone's Government was combating with some show of determination. And certainly there seemed then to be no lack of resolution outside the circles of negotiation. We were answering Russia's war preparations

with equal preparations on our own part. The Reserves were under orders to turn out; and all that money and labour could do to repair the neglect of years in our military position, was being done with a rapidity that savoured of eagerness to assert our rights, if, indeed, it did not partake of the nature of a panic. But on the morning of the 9th April, the day on which Parliament was to reassemble, the news of an encounter between General Komaroff and the Afghans at Dash Kepri gave a new twist to the situation. We do not intend to follow the controversy which this action has excited, and which seems to us to have been allowed to assume an importance detrimental to the main question at stake. The attack need have caused no astonishment—something of the kind, indeed, was expected from the time that we knew the Afghans and Russians to be within grappling distance of each other, and the Government had received warning of its probability as early as 13th March. Nor does it matter much whether Komaroff led an unprovoked assault upon an Afghan force, which had no other end in view than the observation of his manœuvres, and to cover the position at Penjdeh; or whether the threatening attitude of the Afghans was such as to compel a moderate general, however peacefully disposed, to drive them off. This is not really the point in which we are interested. What we wish to know is,—Had General Komaroff any right to be in a position where there was a possibility of a collision between him and the Afghans? His various accounts of the situation may be all very true, so far as they can be reconciled to each other, in spite of the suspicion which attempts at

“doctoring” them have naturally aroused. He may be as veracious as he is undoubtedly zealous: in short, we can afford to accept him at the Russian estimate—“*mais que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?*”

The Komaroff incident was of incalculable service to the Russian negotiations. It served as a red herring trailed across the scent which Mr Gladstone and his colleagues were reluctantly pursuing, and at once drew them off on another track. We had to endure the usual spectacle of Russia washing her hands in innocency, and compelling the British Cabinet to clear her character for good faith in the eyes of Europe. By this course she gained time to complete her military preparations, in case the British should not prove so pliant as she had calculated on; and by dragging Sir Peter Lumsden's name into a controversy with which he had nothing to do, she secured—what she was, above all, anxious for—his departure from the frontier,—whither, if we understand that gallant officer's character aright, he is not likely to return,—and consequently a chance of breaking up the odious Commission.

When all the papers are forthcoming, it will, we imagine, be found that the negotiations themselves were on our side of a very feeble and restricted character, compared with the bustle and display of determination which both nations were making out of doors. The Czar, it was given out, had a special train waiting in readiness to carry him to Moscow, where he might publish a declaration of war with all due formality. Mr Gladstone, on the other hand, demanded a vote of war credit for eleven millions sterling. And then, when each party had thus shown how terribly in earnest it was, to work

they went again at discussing the differences between them. Russia was resolved to gain her point—without fighting if she could, but to gain it. Mr Gladstone and his friends were resolved to evade war by any sacrifice that would not, in their opinion, absolutely discredit them both at home and abroad. While they were thus feeling the way to an understanding, each party evidently keeping in the background what it had most at heart, Mr Gladstone electrified Europe with a great speech—a speech worthy of the days of Pitt or Palmerston, if it had been the genuine expression of the sentiments of himself and his Government. It was a pleasure both to Tory and Liberal to hear the true voice of the country made to re-echo once more over Europe in tones of lofty resolution to maintain the right, and abide by the issue; and all feelings of party faded before the thought that in the hour of extremity the honour of the country was as dear to the aged Liberal Premier as to his Conservative opponent. But alas for the result! These grave and weighty utterances which made Europe once more turn her eyes on England, were merely meant to pass the vote of credit, and secure the theatrical display of a united House of Commons. This achieved, Mr Gladstone was the first to recoil in alarm from the impression which his own words had made, and to seek to neutralise their effect by extra pliancy and accommodation in the diplomatic discussions. No time was lost in proposing that the question, whether or not the “agreement” or “arrangement” or “solemn covenant” which Russia had, or had not, violated, should be referred to the arbitration of a friendly State—that is, to a second-rate European sovereign, for none

of the great Powers will condescend to concern themselves with the dispute; and this was soon followed by the concession of the “preliminary understanding” regarding the frontier for which Russia has been contending all along, and which secures her in her present position, irrespective of territorial rights which any subsequent investigation may bring to light. Moreover, to facilitate the task of arbitration, and to show Europe how little respect Russia has for the English view of the matter, the hero of Dash Kepri has received a sword of honour and other distinctions commensurate with the service which his exploit has done his Government in scaring the Liberal Cabinet of Great Britain.

If this is not surrender, what is it? Russia has been allowed to save the benefits of Komaroff and Alikhanoff's aggressions, to escape the judgment of the Boundary Commission, and to establish herself, with the consent of Britain, in a position which will enable her to directly influence our future in India. The Conservative party, throughout the acute stage of the negotiations, loyally refrained from interfering with the Government's course of action, either by way of criticism or by advice. But the time came when it was imperative to break silence if it was not to be recorded that the honour of the country and the future of British rule in India had been sacrificed without a voice raised in opposition. It devolved on Lord Salisbury to take the lead; and in his speech at Hackney on the 5th of last month, he most powerfully vindicated a fearless exercise of the responsibilities which rest upon Great Britain at this moment. In both Houses his example has been effectively followed on the Con-

tive side, with the result that a feeling is being actively created for the necessity of letting light in upon these negotiations which are discrediting British statesmanship and juggling the interests of ourselves and posterity.

Hitherto attention has been so taken up with the anxieties and dangers of the diplomatic situation, that the question, Who is to blame for the presence of Russians inside the Afghan Empire? has scarcely been raised. This is a question that the British people must immediately and the interests which have at stake are too vital for them to be contented with evasive and evasive answers. It does not suffice to say that Russian aggressiveness and lust of glory are to blame. The blame

rests with those who, well knowing whither Muscovite intrigues were being pushed, took precautions to meet and counteract them. It does not require a penetration to forecast the Premier's rejoinder that our difficulties with Russia, and the danger which will in future overshadow our Empire in the East, were the direct result of Lord Lytton's Afghan policy and that our north-western move-

ment from the Indian frontier was a confession of weakness in that direction, and consequent invitation to Russia; that it is one of those pernicious legacies which Lord Beaconsfield's Government left him. So certain are we to be the excuses behind which Mr Gladstone will seek to exonerate himself, that we do not hesitate to run the risk of supplying him with them. But the excuses are getting tired of hearing fresh disaster into which the Liberal Ministry flounders laid at the door of Lord Beaconsfield's

Government. The *damnosa hereditas* plea has become monotonous. We must judge for ourselves about the exact degree of culpability which attaches to the different administrations under the auspices of whose carelessness Russia has been allowed to take up a position from which she is now able to menace and permanently affect British interests in Asia.

A very brief statement of facts will suffice to show our errors, and indicate by whom and under what colour of policy these errors were committed. It is not for purposes of mere recrimination that we take a retrospect of the proceedings which have led up to the recent crisis and present humiliation of England. We are rather concerned to gather from the mistakes of our past policy some lessons that may be useful in influencing our future conduct in Central Asia.

The conquest of Samarcand in 1868 is one of the great landmarks in Russia's southern advance. The step was important enough to excite the attention of Europe; and Russia waited with considerable anxiety for the verdict of political opinion. A Conservative Government was then in power in England, and the Foreign Office at St Petersburg knew that Tory Ministers were disposed to view their encroachments on the Khanates with grave mistrust. Perhaps it may be asked, Why then did not the Conservative Government challenge Russia's breaking up the Bokhara Khanate, or at least give some definite intimation that her advance must pause here? No doubt they would have done so but for the fact that on coming into office they found their hands tied by what really amounted to an understanding on the subject between Earl Russell and Prince Gortschakoff. From the fall of

Tashkend in 1865, Prince Gortschakoff had skillfully prepared the Liberal Cabinet for the reduction of Bokhara and the annexation of Samarcand and the Zerafshan valley. In August of that year Baron Brunnow informed Earl Russell of the alleged grievances against the Khan of Bokhara, and intimated the intention which Russia had of punishing him; and Earl Russell, in a despatch to Sir A. Buchanan, dated September 16th of that year, practically accepts the situation, and declares that her Majesty's Government "are quite ready to believe that legitimate desires for the extension of commerce and the security of the Russian frontiers, and no wish for territorial aggrandisement, guide the proceedings of the Government of Russia." Hence, in face of the fact that Earl Russell had been taken into Prince Gortschakoff's confidence, we had no right to complain of her seizure of Samarcand. It is important, however, to note that although in point of time this conquest corresponded with the term in office of a Conservative Ministry, The Bokhara expedition was planned and partially carried out while their predecessors were in power.

Mr Disraeli's Government were fully alive to the effects which the appearance of the Russians on the Oxus would produce upon Afghanistan and India. Through the Government of India new and more cordial approaches were made to the Ameer,—with considerable reluctance by Lord Lawrence, with great zeal and cordiality by Lord Mayo, who soon after became Viceroy. Lord Mayo succeeded in inspiring Shere Ali with confidence; and had he been left unfettered, he would in all probability have knit Afghanistan and India so closely together, that not only the melancholy termination of the Ameer's

career, but all our subsequent troubles in Afghanistan, might have been evaded. But with the advent of Mr Gladstone's Ministry to office, Lord Mayo found all his efforts to exert a favourable influence on Central Asian affairs neutralised. The Duke of Argyll, who took over the India Office from Sir Stafford Northcote, carried the Liberal dogma of non-interference to its extreme limits. He vetoed both the eager wish of the Ameer and the disposition of Lord Mayo and his Council to have a new treaty concluded, and to have our mutual offensive and defensive obligations much more sharply defined than the general agreement to be "friend of the friends and enemy of the enemies" of each other, as had been covenanted between us and Dost Mohammed. A great opportunity was thus thrown away, and we soon had cause to regret it, for shortly afterwards General Kauffmann began to make direct overtures to Afghanistan, which the Ameer, however, loyally discovered to Lord Mayo's Government.

With the arrival of Lord Northbrook in India, we lost our power of touch upon Central Asian affairs. Out of charity for his lordship's capacity, we are forced to conclude that he honestly believed it to be his duty to alienate Shere Ali from British-Indian interests, and to drive him into the arms of Russian intriguers, who, as the Calcutta Foreign Office had abundant evidence to show, were sedulously endeavouring to gain the ear of the Ameer.

From 1870, when, under cover of orders to intimate to all the Central Asian Powers that a perfect understanding existed between Britain and Russia, General Kauffmann sought to open up intimate relations with the Ameer, down to

the time of the Stolieteff mission, we are cognisant of a constant series of attempts made by Russia to draw the Ameer into the web of Central Asian intrigue. Unfortunately, during the whole of the intervening period, two agencies mutually counteractive of each other guided British diplomacy. At first we had Lord Mayo zealously endeavouring to confirm the Ameer in his alliance with us, to have definite bounds prescribed to the Russian advance, and to exclude the Czar's emissaries from Afghanistan; but we had also the Liberal Cabinet not merely giving Lord Mayo no encouragement, but aiding Russia to play the very game which she had in view. These positions were presently changed. The center of activity and vigilance was transferred to her Majesty's Government, in which Lord Salisbury, as Indian Secretary, most inefficiently aided by the Foreign Office, under Lord Derby, strove energetically to exercise some control over Russian aggression. But Lord Northbrook's inaptitude and indifference more than neutralised all the efforts which the Marquis of Salisbury and the Indian Office could make to preserve Shere Ali from Russian entanglements. Lord Northbrook's Afghan policy, contributing as it directly did to the ruin and miserable fate of Shere Ali Khan and to the Afghan war, admits of no palliative explanation. He was something more than a mere clog upon the energies of a Government anxious to seek a stable settlement of this constantly vexing Central Asian Question. He quarrelled with the Ameer over the by no means vital question of the succession to the Afghan throne; irritated his Highness by interfering with his arrest of Yakoob Khan, for which sufficient grounds had been

shown; and shook his confidence by negativing his request for a more definite understanding, in case of a Russian attack upon Afghanistan. The result was that Shere Ali was allowed, if not impelled, to drift towards Russian emissaries.

Lord Salisbury was not long in office when he foresaw that the danger of Russian aggression, which the recent seizure of Khiva had shown to be growing more and more imminent, demanded vigilant watching. In January 1875 he instructed the Government of India to take "measures with as much expedition as the circumstances of the case permit, for procuring the assent of the Ameer to the establishment of a British agency at Herat." How did Lord Northbrook proceed to carry out this injunction? By collecting evidence among Indian officials as to the improbability of the Ameer acceding to such a proposal, and by combating Lord Salisbury's orders in a despatch signed, by himself and his counsel, all his colleagues being at that time adherents of the "masterly inactivity" school, except, perhaps, Lord Napier of Magdala; and at the same time urging that it would be time enough to take precautionary measures when the Russians had occupied Merv! Lord Salisbury, however, was not to be put off with such a reply, and in November of the same year he instructed the Indian Government to find occasion to send a special mission to Cabul to urge "very earnestly" upon the Ameer the desirability of stationing British officers on the frontier of Afghanistan. Again Lord Northbrook succeeded in shuffling out of his instructions on the score of doubts as to whether the Ameer would receive an envoy; and soon after his Excel-

of Russia,—that England would not move if Russia did not ?” The tone which we adopted on that occasion led to another of those long and delusive memorandums on the subject of Russia by which Prince Gortschakoff, when beaten on one line, transferred the scene of action to a new one. He declared that the circular of 1864, which had been ostensibly published as an assurance of the limited and moderate aims of Russian action, had “excluded the possibility of any interpretation implying an engagement contracted by Russia towards Europe or with any individual Power.” No doubt there was no engagement in the sense of a treaty, but there had been such assurances given, coupled with such explanation as constituted a strong obligation on the part of Russia to keep the faith which had been implied in these. The Gortschakoff Memorandum of 1875 offered a historical apology for Russia’s part on all the subjects of Central Asian debate between her and England during the previous eleven years ; and in the despatch which accompanied it, Prince Gortschakoff made the following declaration of the Czar’s policy :—

“His Imperial Majesty has no intention of extending the frontiers of Russia such as they at present exist in Central Asia, either on the side of Bokhara or on the side of Krasnovodsk and of the Attrek. We have no inducement to do so. On the contrary, the Emperor deems any extension of our frontiers in these parts as being opposed to our own interests. We shall cause those frontiers to be respected, and shall protect our commerce ; we shall punish any act of violence and pillage in such a manner as to prevent their recurrence ; we shall endeavour to extirpate brigandage, and to establish the security of our possessions.”

We have quoted this statement

because it sums up in a few words the policy which Russia has followed in Central Asia. She has no intention of advancing according to her own account, but she will not adopt a frontier which would enable her to rest. Extension of territory she has always declared to be opposed to her own interests, and yet as often as she has made this declaration she has extended her territory still further. And at the same time she always indicates the defence behind which she can shelter herself when her word has again been violated. She must protect her frontiers and her commerce, and restrain violence and pillage. Well, all this can be done without annexation ; we ourselves have for more than thirty years shown her how such a task is to be achieved on our Afghan frontier. It is this policy as enunciated and defended by Prince Gortschakoff that has led her to Herat : that would lead her to Cabul and Candahar, to the Khyber and the Bolan ; and might in the end lead her to the Bay of Bengal, if she were allowed to take up these intermediate positions. The qualification made up by Prince Gortschakoff in the words we have quoted is wide enough to cover any aggression, any extension of territory, no matter in which direction or at the expense of what Power it is made, and yet leave Russia a loophole through which by considerable pressure her good faith and claims to consistency can be squeezed.

Prince Gortschakoff’s explanations when referred to Lord Salisbury met with very incisive criticism. The Marquis declared that it was “inexpedient, if not impossible, for her Majesty’s Government to accept the position of inaction which Prince Gortschakoff’s letter apparently wishes to force upon it, whatever may be the character of future

operations by Russia against the Turkomans ;" that "even a tacit acquiescence in the statements and conclusions of the memorandum by the Russian Government may lead to future inconvenience ;" and he formally claimed "a liberty of action in all contingencies and in all quarters for the British Government as full as that claimed by the Government of Russia."

The representations made by the Conservative Government in 1875 had the effect of arresting direct and overt action, although the Russian officers in Asia continued to intrigue and plan further operations as before. The advance by the Attrek was for the time stopped, and Russian energy was diverted into regions more remote from European surveillance. It was to provide us with certain information, instead of the more or less reliable rumours which from time to time reached us of Russian doings in the Khanates and on the Balkh border, that Lord Salisbury endeavoured to obtain the appointment of British agents in Afghanistan. We have already seen how, through the inability of Lord Northbrook's Government to influence the Ameer, who had been bitterly alienated from British interests by the policy of the Liberal Government, Lord Salisbury's instructions fell through. Had we had a British representative at Herat and Candahar in 1876, there would have been but little possibility that General Kauffmann would have presumed to open up these relations with the Cabul durbar which speedily led to the ruin of Shere Ali. We would have had no Russian mission to Cabul, with the war which was inevitably bound to flow from it. And, what more immediately concerns us at present, it is very improbable that we should have had

the Russians occupying the passes commanding the Herat country ; or at all events we would have been better prepared for meeting them when they made their appearance. The situation now confronting us only preaches another homily, on the penny-wise-and-pound-foolish principle which colours all Liberal foreign policy, which makes Ministers ignore and evade danger at first appearance, only to have to grapple with it, nil they will they, when its forces have been developed to their fullest.

With Lord Salisbury at the India Office and Lord Lytton at the head of the Indian Government, energetic attempts were made to stem the tide of the coming evil, by endeavouring on the one hand to arrest the attempts which General Kauffmann's agents were making to insinuate themselves into Afghan politics and secure a footing in the country, and on the other to recall the Ameer to the obligations of his alliance with India. But for both these objects their best effort were ineffectual. Ameer Shere Ali Khan too bitterly resented the treatment which he had received from the Duke of Argyll and Lord Northbrook, and was already too implicated with Russia to listen to Lord Lytton's proffers and counsels. From the side of St Petersburg we could do equally little. The shadow of a Russo-Turkish war had fallen upon Europe, and the Liberals were stirring the country to sympathy with Russia as the champion of the oppressed principalities of the Porte, and as the deliverer who was to turn the "unspeakable Turk" out of Europe "bag and baggage." The old taunt of Russophobia was freely hurled at any one who even then ventured to say that Russia was rapidly taking up a position in Asia which would enable her to make her influence

felt to the disadvantage of England, in the event of a European difficulty occurring between the two Powers. The Conservative Government, however, did its best to obtain an explanation of the Russian aims in trafficking with the Ameer, and have a stop put to communications between General Kauffmann and Cabul. The diplomatic correspondence with St Petersburg during the year 1876, read in the light of the disclosures which came from the side of Afghanistan, clearly show the game of duplicity and bad faith which Russia was then playing. Regarding General Kauffmann's letters to the Ameer, Russia at first professed ignorance, then disbelief, then denial; and finally, when irrefragable evidence was produced, declared that the correspondence was merely dictated by courtesy, and had no political significance—statements which the letters themselves showed to be untrue. General Kauffman, not to be outdone by unscrupulousness at St Petersburg, denied both letters and envoys, and finally, the despatch of the famous mission to Shere Ali, even after these were facts known to all Europe. With a Government so prone to evasion, and so committed to a policy of duplicity, little was to be done at that time except to remonstrate, as, with the fate of Turkey depending upon the cautious attitude and moderation of Lord Beaconsfield's Government, we were not then in a position to enforce an authoritative interdict upon Russian aggressive movements in Central Asia. But at the India or the Foreign Office each fresh step that Russia took was carefully noted by Lord Salisbury, and she was given to understand that England was an interested and attentive spectator of her movements, and that our deter-

mination to maintain the integrity of Afghan territory was only strengthened by every fresh approach in its direction.

The presence of British troops in Afghanistan made a great impression upon Russia. Observation for the time took the place of aggression; and if she did not abandon hope of ultimately effecting a lodgment in the Herat country, she was very careful to do nothing that might direct attention to the north-west frontier so long as Cabul and Candahar were in British occupation. Naturally she thought that no nation having the care of India upon its hands, and governed by statesmen possessed of common-sense, would forego the security which the possession of Candahar guaranteed. At the peace of Candamak, Russia indirectly made known her intention to rest on the line of the Oxus, and for a time seemed as if her policy contemplated encroachments on Persia from the Caspian as a basis. It was at this juncture that the Czar gave his assurance to Lord Dufferin that Merv lay outside the limit of Russian policy. But thanks to Skoboleff's restlessness, those conditions were "created," as the Russian press said, which rendered an onward march necessary; and the return of the Liberals to power, coupled with the immediate announcement that British troops were to be withdrawn from Afghanistan, encouraged Russia to grasp the Tekke country and to prepare for the absorption of Merv and Sarakhs. It ought to be widely known that, coincident with the change of Government in England, Russia addressed a despatch to this country explaining away the Emperor's assurance to Lord Dufferin regarding Merv, and relieving the St Petersburg Ministers of any responsibility which

Britain might attach to acts in violation of that pledge. The Russian Ambassador, however, kept that despatch nine months in his pocket, until the time came when he was obliged to use it in defence of the aggressive proceedings of his Government. Lord Dufferin, when appealed to, stated that the Emperor's assurance was positive, and added (March 8, 1881)—“When the Emperor deigned on two occasions to give me similar assurances, his Majesty made use of the most unequivocal language; and an intimation of this kind proceeding from so august a source possessed a direct and abiding force, which, of necessity, endured until it was formally retracted.” From the time that the Liberal Government took office, Russia adopted a new tone with regard to her encroachments in Central Asia. She treated all demands for explanations *de haut en bas*; she replied to all requests for assurances about the future with a curt “mind your own business”; she no longer sought to present laboured justifications of her actions, as she had attempted when the Conservative Government was in office. Lord Granville uttered feeble complaints, and the rest of his colleagues treated the subject as one unworthy of their attention. The crack of an assassin's rifle in Connemara roused them to greater energies than the booming of cannon to the north of the Caucasus, which announced the onward march of Russia to the Afghan frontier. In March 1881, Sir Charles Dilke, then Under Foreign Secretary, refused in the House of Commons to be at the expense of a telegram to inquire into the truth of a rumour—which after all was merely premature—that the Russians were at Merv. This incident,

otherwise trifling, is an excellent specimen of the indifference which Mr Gladstone's Government manifested to a danger which every person of intelligence saw to be, month by month, assuming larger proportions. When Lord Granville pressed for information as to the frontiers of the newly annexed Tekke country, the snubbing reply M. de Giers gave him was, “He was not aware that when the English annexed territories they were asked what their frontiers were.” When, in February 1882, he endeavoured to obtain “some agreement as regards the policy and position of the two Powers in Asia,” Prince Lobanow quietly told him that “it was with Persia that they had then to deal;” and indirectly hinted that until the Russian frontier impinged upon Afghanistan, Britain had no claim to interpose. Again, in the same year, Lord Granville urged “that if the possession of Sarakhs were at any time aimed at by Russia, it could not be for the purposes which have hitherto been stated by them as their object,”—a plea the piteousness of which deserved a more gentle answer than the rebuff that “the matter concerned Russia and the Shah exclusively.”

In fact, from the time when Mr Gladstone came into the Government and the Foreign Office fell into the hands of Lord Granville, all power of influencing the Central Asian question was lost to England. From that time down to the present, Russia has not had the decency to resort even to dissimulation, and has gone straight to her goal as if there had been an amicable understanding with the British Government upon the subject. Sarakhs and Merv were annexed, almost without a murmur from the Liberal Government, and certainly without any remonstrance that was worth Russia's attention.

When at last, in the face of former engagements, she could no longer refuse to consent to a delimitation of the Afghan frontier, she took care to anticipate the decision of the Commission by seizing upon those positions inside the Ameer's territory which were best calculated to enable her to carry on the game which she has so long and so successfully played.

We have already seen enough of the spirit and fashion in which the negotiations are being conducted to appreciate the situation which we are now called upon to face. Russia has now definitely planted herself inside the Afghan frontier, with one foot on Penjdeh and the other on Zulfikar, and with Herat lying under her shadow. This is apparently the result the negotiations have brought about. Had we stood firm for the integrity of the Ameer's territories, had we taken the field as we threatened to do, we should have been able to

force her to accept a frontier which would have admitted of Afghanistan remaining independent,—we might, perchance, have been able to force her back upon Merv as the limit beyond which she was not to advance. But Mr Gladstone and M. de Giers have made an independent Afghanistan an impossibility. With Penjdeh in her possession, Russia can interrupt all communication between Cabul and Balkah during the four or five months in which the passes of the Hindoo Kooah are blocked with snow. She will hold the Ameer responsible for the good behaviour of his Balkh subjects, when his power over them, which at the best is but limited, will be rendered altogether impossible. She may accept the line of the Oxus as a boundary; but will she be able to keep that line, any more than she has been able to hold to others? The same procedure which she has followed in other cases, will

¹ Six years ago, in an article in this Magazine, in which we pointed out that Russian aggression, unless firmly checked, must culminate speedily in some such crisis as the present, we thus described the policy by which Russia was adding area by area, and khanate by khanate, to her Central Asian acquisitions, as well as the assistance which the Liberals were rendering to her advance: "So long as the Turkestan commanders conducted their operations with secrecy and despatch, the Russian Chancellor was well content to let them play their own game. If they were successful, the St Petersburg Government would undertake their justification; if they failed, it would apologise for the *'mal entendu'*, as M. de Westmann, the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, called General Llamakin's ambitions attempt to annex the Attrek and Goorgan valleys to Russia. The only mistake they could commit was being found out too soon. This gave rise to awkward questions, which could not always safely be met by a denial, and might compel the Government for its own credit to stop the undertaking. We hear much of Russian autocracy and military despotism, but really the despatches in the Central Asian Blue-book would almost tempt us to suppose that no administrators and commandants have, in modern times, enjoyed half the freedom and latitude that have been extended to the Russian officers in Central Asia. There is, withal, a deal of ingenuous modesty manifested in the way in which they describe their own proceedings. A military expedition is playfully designated as a *'reconnaissance'*; an annexation proclamation, commanding obedience to the 'Sovereign of the world,' and telling the Turkomans 'to look to themselves for good or evil,' is a 'mere friendly letter' (Correspondence respecting Central Asia, p. 17); scouting expeditions are simply scientific explorations,—and so on. Another very surprising fact revealed by the correspondence is, that the St Petersburg Government knew next to nothing of the proceedings of its officers in Central Asia, for it is almost invariably by the circuitous route, *via* the Government of

doubtless hold good here, until, at some early date, we find Russia bewailing the "imperious necessity" which has compelled her, much against her will, to annex all the Ameer's territories north of the Paropamisus. Does Mr Gladstone intend to present Russia with Balkh at this juncture, or does he propose to reserve it for the Ameer? In the latter case, it is obvious that we shall have to charge ourselves with providing some means of securing order among the Balkh tribes, as well as of preventing Russia exacting those conditions which would give her a colourable pretext for interfering with them. Thus we may safely anticipate that before long time elapses the Ameer of Cabul must, consequent upon the present position of Russia, find himself shorn of his Balkh dominions. And what shall we say of Southern Afghanistan? We suppose no British statesman—not even Mr Gladstone, far less any military authority—will now recommend that our Indian defensive frontier is to remain the Suleiman range and the line of the Indus. With Russia overlooking Herat, we shall be compelled, if not in self-defence, at least to reassure the tranquillity of our Indian subjects to advance our strategical frontier to Candahar and the Helmund. When the

question of a scientific frontier was examined in 1877-78 by the chief civil and military authorities in India, there were still many of them who refused to recognise the possibility of Russia arriving within a distance from which she would be able to menace Herat; but even then there were many authoritative opinions expressed against the disadvantages of our existing frontier.

"It has been frequently asserted," said Lord Napier of Magdala, "that we shall be secure if we remain within our mountain-boundary. But this is at variance with all history. A mountain-chain that can be pierced in many places is no security if you hide behind it. India has been often entered through her mountain-barrier, which was never defended. India waited to fight the battle in her own plains, and invariably lost it. How much Austria lost in not defending the Bohemian mountains! What might have been the position of the Turks had they not properly closed the passage of the Balkans?"

We have also the authority of Sir Edward Hamley, the ablest strategist of our time, in favour of the advantages which the occupation of Candahar would afford us in repelling an invasion of India from the north-west. In a lecture delivered at the United Service Institute on the 13th December 1878, General Hamley, viewing his subject entirely in a military

India, our Foreign Office, and the British Ambassador at St Petersburg, that it receives any information of its own aggressions in Turkistan. And so careful were the Liberals, when in office, of Russia's sensitive feelings about the proceedings of her representatives in Central Asia, that they invariably evaded all allusion to these until they had become a matter of European scandal. This course kept our relations with Russia to all appearances fair and above-board; but it was merely a time policy, and each Government knew that the other had something behind hand. We have only too clear a proof of the timidity and want of frankness on our own side, in the suppression by the Liberal Cabinet of the Indian despatch, dated 30th June 1878, which Lord Northbrook had summed up in a tone conciliatory to Russia, and 'in accord with Gladstone's speech,' and which the Calcutta Government had expressly desired to be handed to the Czar's Ministers."—See "The Afghan War and its Authors," Blackwood's Magazine, January 1879.

light and apart from political considerations, thus sums up the conditions of a sufficient frontier :—

“ Looking at the northern half of this part of our territory, I think we should be thankful for possessing a frontier so easily rendered impregnable. Looking at the southern half, we have no less reason to be thankful for having acquired, in Quetta, such means of vigorous and effective action, and such an opportunity of securing new advantages of the most important and decisive kind. *With a garrison strongly posted in its lines at Candahar, with all the routes and stages by which our forces might be assembled on that point, all sources of supply and all arrangements for transport, laid down as our trained staff officers are certainly capable of laying them down we might view calmly any possible complications before us, whether arising from the augmented military power of Russia in the East, from the success of her intrigues, or from her open hostility.* The grounds of our assurance would be manifest and easily understood, our native subjects would soon learn to appreciate them, and what would be security for us would be tranquillity for India.”

If we have to again advance to the Helmund—and it rests at present with Mr Gladstone to show how our position in India is to be secured if we do not—Southern Afghanistan will to all intents be lopped off from Cabul. We may do all that we can to preserve the semblance of the Ameer's authority there, but it is inevitable that the province of Candahar will soon, to all intents, become as much a part of British Indian territory as Gwalior or Indore. The Ameer will thus find himself confined to his Cabul dominions, and occupying a by no means enviable position between two Powers, both of whom will distrust him, and with both of whom he must perforce keep on terms. One consolation Abdurrahman will doubtless be able to

extract from the situation: he will now enjoy subsidies from two Powers instead of from one, and the Russian roubles will not be less welcome to the Afghan mind that they may perhaps be supplied secretly and in contravention of agreement. Whatever promises Abdurrahman may have made at Rawul Pindi, and however much he might value an exclusive alliance with British India, were Russia on the other side of the Oxus, he must, now that Muscovite garrisons are hanging on his borders, cultivate the good graces of the Czar's Government. It is idle to repose faith on Afghan fidelity; and we may feel assured that the Ameer of Cabul will recoup himself for loss of territory by accepting subsidies from both sides, and by cheating both as much as he can contrive to. His willingness to accede to Mr Gladstone's surrender of part of his territory is a not uncertain indication of his perception of the necessity of keeping on good terms with his new neighbour. He will find, however, that Russia is indulgent to treachery only when it is practised by herself, and that she is accustomed to receive a higher interest upon political investments of her capital than Britain has been wont to claim. No treaties, conventions, agreements, or arrangements of any nature that Mr Gladstone and M. de Giers may devise, can prevent the Afghan sovereignty from speedy and complete extinction, as a direct result of the present entanglement.

It would be idle at this juncture to speculate as to what may be done between the negotiators with regard to Herat. From what has been already arranged, it would not be unjust to conclude that it is to be left under Afghan government until it suits the convenience of Rus-

sia to occupy it. If, however, we desire to keep Herat out of Russian hands, there is only one way in which that aim is likely to be effected. Herat must be strongly fortified, be converted into a great *place des armes*, at British expense, garrisoned for the Ameer by British Indian as well as Afghan troops, and placed under the command of a British officer. It would be supreme folly to trust such an important position to Afghan soldiers or an Afghan commandant, whose gates would readily open to Russia's golden key. But perhaps we are needlessly anticipating matters. Very likely the security of Herat does not form any part of Mr Gladstone's policy; it may be that it is to be left for Russia, "at your service—take, and welcome, when you are so disposed." In the same way it may be useless to point out that the new frontier, if we succeed in agreeing on one, will speedily be converted into a base for a further advance, unless the regulation of the marches is intrusted to British officers, who will see fair-play between Russians and Afghans, and settle any conflict between them before an excuse is furnished for the former resorting to war. This is an arrangement which naturally Russia will be very loath to accede to, and which Mr Gladstone is very unlikely to press, as he has the old excuse of the unwillingness of the Ameer to fall back upon. No doubt the Ameer would be unwilling to have his frontier placed under the charge of British officers; their presence would interfere with the free passage of bribes and the free play of intrigue between Merv and Cabul. But on the other hand, since Russia has established herself inside the Afghan border, the willingness or unwillingness of the Ameer cannot be allowed to count for so much as it did with

Lord Northbrook, when he used Shere Ali's disposition as an unanswerable argument for thwarting the Conservative Secretary of State.

Mr Gladstone may endeavour to persuade the constituencies of this country that he is playing the part of a great and prudent statesman in moderating our indignant feelings at the way Russia has been allowed to cheat and outwit us, and in sinking all sentiments of jealousy and resentment for the sake of averting the evil of war. Should he succeed in patching up any sort of understanding with Russia, no matter how temporary or hurtful to us in the future, his followers are prepared to hail it as a diplomatic victory, under the flush of which they may present themselves for re-election. The Premier himself is in all probability meditating a "Brummagem" revival at the hustings of the "Peace-with-honour" triumphal return from Berlin. "*Populus vult decipi, decipiatur.*" Let us not grudge the palm-branches or spare our lungs in huzzaing; the bayonets and groans will come in due course.

Mr Gladstone may impose upon the British elector whose only anxiety is to have a Liberal Government returned to office; but there are over 253,000,000 of British subjects in India who know well how their future will be affected by the interchange of civilities that is taking place between London and St Petersburg. These know that the evil day is only being postponed, when the question of supremacy between England and Russia in Asia must be settled in another way than by diplomacy. They also know by experience that while Russia will steadily prepare for this event,

Britain will fall back into her old self-confident indifference to everything that concerns her interests outside the British Islands. And even should due precaution be taken to keep Russia in check and prevent her from a second time springing a mine upon us, the rapid development which India has been undergoing under our administration must receive a severe check. Ever since the Mutiny, the question of the defence of our Indian empire has happily been a matter of secondary consideration. Now it must take the first place in the mind of every Government in that country. The increase of the Indian army—the extension of our frontier to the Helmund—the construction of arsenals, military railways, and strategical works,—will now swallow up the larger portion of the revenue which we have hitherto been able to expend upon works of utility and in the improvement of the people. We shall have to largely increase our native forces just at the time when we are beginning to discover that the old recruiting-grounds where we were wont to raise such excellent soldiers are practically worked out, and that civilisation and prosperity are rendering the former military classes indifferent to the attraction of a warlike career. Added to this, we shall have to encounter the doubts that are being fast engendered in the minds of the native masses as to our ability to hold the country should Russia choose to lay her hands upon it,—a sentiment

which will create new and most serious difficulties for our administration. We have also a source of new danger introduced in times of popular excitement; for however sensible the natives may be of the greater beneficence of British rule, political experience clearly tells us that wisdom is not proof against the temptation of passion, and that at such times the sympathy of a rival Power is readily had recourse to. Our ability to influence the natives will henceforth be greatly impaired; and the exercise of our powers over them, which has always been for their benefit, must in future be restricted by the feeling that there is a powerful neighbouring State ready to turn any popular grievances among our native subjects to our own disadvantage. Our career in India, until a few months ago so bright and promising, has been suddenly overcast with the cloud of a future full of difficulties and dangers. And why? Merely because England chooses to commit the destinies of her empire to the guidance of a demagogue instead of a statesman. The sole ground for hoping that we may yet be able to save our position in Asia, and re-establish our credit in Europe, is to be found in the Premier's own intimation that he is "a person whose future intervention in political conflicts is much more likely to be measured by weeks than by months, and certainly by months more than by years."

GORDON, WOLSELEY, AND SIR CHARLES WILSON.

ONE of her Majesty's officers, of honourable antecedents, and who has lately been engaged in a most responsible service, is at present exposed to imputations, the justice of which it is no less important to the public than to himself to investigate. Everybody knows that Sir Charles Wilson, after crossing the desert with Stewart's column, went up the Nile to Khartoum in the hope of finding Gordon still in possession of the city, and that he only reached it to find it in the hands of the Mahdi. Upon these facts a charge has now been made against him to this effect, that his object was, or should have been, to relieve Gordon and save the city, and that these ends would have been fulfilled had he not unnecessarily delayed to begin his voyage. He is, in fact, accused of having caused the death of Gordon and the fall of Khartoum, by want of due promptitude. This we propose to inquire into, and we will begin with a plain statement of the course of events as set forth chiefly in papers first presented to Parliament; and we do this from a sense of what is due to an officer still absent on service, and unable to enter on his own defence.

On the 18th January, Sir Herbert Stewart, after his first action at Abu Klea, followed by a halt for the night at the wells, resumed his movement towards the Nile. On the morning of the 19th, when between three and four miles from the river, his advance was opposed by the enemy in considerable numbers, whose sharpshooters caused several casualties in our force, besides mortally wounding its commander. The command thereupon devolved upon Colonel Sir Charles

Wilson, R.E. Sir Charles proceeded immediately to strengthen the position in which the force was at the time, constructed some field-works under a heavy fire, left his hospital, stores, and other *impedimenta* there with a garrison to defend them, and with the rest of his troops marched for the Nile. On the way he fought a gallant action with a large force of the enemy, which he completely defeated and drove off—not without fresh losses to his own force—and then marched to the Nile, and bivouacked on its bank. Next day, the 20th, he placed a village near the spot in a condition of defence, and left a small garrison to hold it, while the troops marched back to the position of the day before, and brought away the wounded and most of the stores; not all, however—and he was forced to leave the remainder, protected by one of the small works he had thrown up, till next day. That day, the 21st, several events occurred. He made a reconnaissance in force of the neighbouring town of Metammeh, and found it strongly occupied by the enemy, who had placed it in a state of defence, with loopholed walls, and three guns in position. During the reconnaissance four of Gordon's Egyptian steamers appeared, and landed men and guns to take part in the operation. And the remainder of the stores left in the desert were brought in, and the force being now completely assembled, the camp was moved down to the water's edge, and the village he had previously occupied was held as a fortified outpost.

Here it is to be specially noted that Wilson, hitherto in a quite

irresponsible position with reference to the troops, had now suddenly to provide not only for his mission to Kartoum, but for the safety of the whole force, in most harassing circumstances.

News now began to come in persistently of the approach of bodies of the enemy from both sides, down the Nile from the side of Kartoum, and up the Nile from the side of Berber. Therefore, on the 22d, Wilson, taking three of the newly arrived steamers and two companies of infantry, went down the river to Shendy, reconnoitred the bank, satisfied himself that the enemy was not approaching on that side, and returned to his camp the same day, and handing over the command to Colonel Boscawen, prepared to proceed himself to Kartoum, sending off the same day a despatch to Lord Wolseley informing him of the particulars just narrated.

Now there can be no possible doubt of the view which Lord Wolseley took of Wilson's mission to Kartoum, for he describes it himself in the letter which he wrote from Korti on the 29th January, forwarding the preceding despatch from Wilson. He says—

"I am now also enabled to communicate by steamer direct with General Gordon in Kartoum, and thus to raise the veil which has so long hung round that city, preventing one from ascertaining its real condition, or from communicating my plan to the gallant and heroic soldier who has so long and so nobly defended it under most adverse and extremely trying conditions."

Here then we have the most authentic account possible (subsequently, as we shall see, confirmed from the same source) of what it was that Wilson was expected to do. He was to *open communication with General Gordon,*

in order that he might become acquainted with Wolseley's plan, and be able to co-operate in its accomplishment. And, on the other hand, it is equally certain that Wilson understood his mission in the same sense, for on the 8th January he thus wrote home:—

"I start to-day with Stewart's force to seize Metammeh, and then I am to run the blockade and go into Kartoum to communicate with Gordon, and find out the real state of affairs. . . . I am in capital spirits at the prospect before me, and hope I shall be successful. After all, I shall be one of the first to see Gordon. I am to come back again at once to report to Lord Wolseley, and shall have a long ride here again if he has not come on before I return."

When the steamers came down, they brought with them the last volume of Gordon's diary (which it is not likely that Wilson, occupied as he was, had time to read), and also a letter from Gordon suggesting certain changes as expedient in the manning of the vessels. Fully impressed with the necessity of despatch, Wilson had, notwithstanding his many anxieties about his little force, decided on leaving it in its most precarious situation; and although he himself, its commander, was responsible for its safety, and though it was still threatened with attack, he nevertheless started at 8 A.M. on the 24th on his mission to communicate with Gordon. He had done all he could for his troops by rendering their position defensible and by reconnoitring the neighbourhood; and leaving two steamers under Lord Charles Beresford to assist in the defence, he took two others for his voyage, on board of which were some officers, 20 British non-commissioned officers, and men, and 180 Arabs. The following incident, under the date of

this same day, the 24th, he thus records :—

“ When near Sheikeih I saw on the left bank, in the distance, a portion of the force under Feki Mustafa, which we had heard on the 21st was marching on Metammeh. I ascertained afterwards that this force, about 3000 men, had halted on receiving news of the battle of Metammeh, and then retired to the position at Wad Habeshi, where we met it on our return.”

Navigation is not possible on the Nile in the hours of darkness, and their progress was between dawn and sunset. On the 27th “ a man shouted out from the left bank that a camel-man had just passed with the news that Kartoum had fallen, and that General Gordon had been killed ;” and “ on the 28th, a Shagiyeih on the right bank informed us that Kartoum had fallen two days previously, and that Gordon had been killed.” This same morning the steamers were fired on from Halfiyeh, an Arab village and fort below Kartoum, with four guns and rifles. Next, two guns on the right bank opened on the steamers, and a heavy rifle-fire from both banks, sustained till the vessels came within range of the guns of Omdurman.

Here we will interrupt the diary of events to describe the features of the Nile near Kartoum, which become now of importance. Kartoum is on the bank of the Blue Nile ; the White Nile flows past west of the town ; and the two join about two to three miles below. The Blue Nile, branching at Kartoum, forms the island of Tuti, one end of which is only separated from Kartoum by the branch of the stream ; the other end is nearly opposite the junction of the two Niles, and also nearly opposite Omdurman. This last place is a fort, with works extending down

to the stream, on the west bank ; it had been held by Gordon's troops up to the 14th December, but was closely invested by the Madhi, so that Gordon could only communicate with it by telegraph, and the Arabs had established guns on the river bank there which shelled every vessel that ran down. Gordon had for long been in great anxiety about Omdurman, and it became known to Wilson about the time he reached Gubat that the Madhi had captured it. This of itself made a great change in the situation of Gordon, and entailed a vastly increased risk on vessels attempting to reach him.

Wilson's steamers finally reached the junction of the two Niles, and were between Omdurman on the one side and Tuti Island on the other. Kartoum commands this low flat island ; and the fact that the enemy were on it, almost of itself implied the fall of the city. What followed is thus described in Wilson's report :—

“ When abreast of Tuti Island, which we expected to find in General Gordon's possession, we were received by a sharp musketry-fire at from 75 to 200 yards' range ; three or four guns, of which one was certainly a Krupp, opened upon us from the upper end of Tuti or from Kartoum, two guns from the fort at Omdurman, and a well-sustained rifle-fire from the left bank.

“ On reaching the point marked A on the accompanying map, I came to the conclusion that Kartoum was in the hands of the enemy, and that it would be a useless sacrifice of life to attempt to land or try to force a passage to the town itself. I therefore ordered the *Bordein* to turn and run down the river full speed. The *Tala Hawiyeh*, which had grounded for a few minutes near the upper end of Tuti Island, followed, and the steamers drew up for the night near Tamanieb. Here I sent out two messengers—one to go to Kartoum to ascertain the fate of General

Gordon, the other to collect information. The latter, on his return, stated that he had met a Jaalin Arab, who told him that Kartoum had fallen on the night of the 26th, through the treachery of Farag Pasha and the Mudir of the town, and that General Gordon was dead. He also said that on the 27th the Mahdi had entered Kartoum, prayed in the principal mosque, and then retired to Omdurman, leaving the town to three days' pillage.

"The reasons which led me to the conclusion that Kartoum had fallen were,—the heavy fire brought to bear upon us from Tuti Island; the absence of any fire from Kartoum in our support; the fact that no Egyptian flag was flying from any place in or near the town, though Government and other houses were plainly visible; the presence of a large number of dervishes with their banners on the sand-spit B; and the fact that a number of General Gordon's troop-boats and nuggers were lying along the left bank of the White Nile under Omdurman Fort."

On the 29th one of the steamers ran on a rock and foundered. Everything was taken on board the other, which continued the descent of the river till, on the 31st, within about 30 to 40 miles of the camp at Gubat, and a little above a fortified post of the enemy, the remaining steamer grounded, and was beached on a small island, where everything was landed. At dark, Lieutenant Stuart-Wortley, of Wilson's staff, started for Gubat with information of the situation and a request for assistance. He left in a small boat, and running past the battery, reached Gubat early next morning. Here he gave his report of the events he had witnessed to the officer commanding, who forwarded it with a letter of his own to Lord Wolseley the same day, (1st Feb.). Lord Wolseley, in his despatch to Lord Hartington, dated 9th Feb., conveying the information of the fall of Kartoum,

says: "Lieutenant Stuart-Wortley's report, which is amongst the enclosures of this despatch, describes the attempt made by Colonel Sir Charles Wilson to reach Kartoum *for the purpose of communicating with General Gordon.*" (This is the confirmation of the nature of Wilson's mission which we before alluded to.) And in the same despatch, Lord Wolseley says that if the news of the fall of Kartoum be true, "the mission of this force, which was *the relief of Kartoum,* falls to the ground. The strength and composition of this little army, was calculated *for the relief,* not the siege and capture of Kartoum." (The italics are ours.)

Wilson remained on the island till the 3d February, when, just as he was preparing to make his way down the right bank, Lord Charles Beresford in the *Safieh* came to the rescue, and after a fight with the enemy's battery, in which Wilson took part with his one gun and his riflemen from the opposite bank, all were embarked, and reached Gubat on the evening of the 4th. Wilson then started for Korti, and was there on or before the 11th, for his report is dated from that place on that day.

Up to this time, we have seen, there was no question as to the nature of Wilson's mission. But it had now become deeply impressed on Lord Wolseley's mind that the costly, lavishly-supplied expedition, to which the attention of the world had been so pointedly invited, was a lamentable failure. His meditations on this subject seem to have given birth to the idea that Wilson might be made responsible for the catastrophe, for in his next despatch, dated 15th February, forwarding Wilson's report of the 11th, Wolseley says:—

"MY LORD,—I have the honour to enclose a Report by Sir Charles Wil-

son of his endeavour to reach Kartoum in a steamer for the purpose of communicating with General Gordon. Attached to this report is an interesting diary of events, and Sir Charles Wilson's proceedings upon that occasion.

"It is sad to think of how nearly averted was the fall of Kartoum, and how short was the interval of time between the death of General Gordon and the arrival of those steamers whose appearance before Kartoum with a few British soldiers on board would, he said, ensure his safety and that of the city also.

"This opinion so expressed by General Gordon, and other evidence lately obtained, leave little doubt that had Sir C. Wilson's steamers, with the small detachment of British soldiers they carried, reached Kartoum on the 25th instead of the 28th January, the place would not have been surrendered.

"In justice to the soldiers and sailors whom I have the honour to command, I feel bound to add that it was not through any lack of zeal or want of energy on their part that these steamers only reached Kartoum two days after it had fallen. I have no hesitation in saying that all ranks worked as hard as human beings could, hoping to render the earliest possible assistance to their heroic comrade who was besieged in Kartoum."

Alongside these passages, implying such a heavy charge against Wilson, we will place some others from the end of Gordon's diary, and, therefore, containing the last of his recorded opinions on the subject. Halfiyeh is an Arab village and fort on the right (east) bank of the Nile, about 8 to 10 miles below Kartoum, and Wilson's steamers had sustained a heavy fire from it in running past. Under date of the 28th November, Gordon's diary says—

"If the steamers do come up, and have not the sense to stop at Halfiyeh, I shall endeavour to warn them by a tremendous fire on the Arabs at Omdurman. The danger is at the point. [This is where Wilson stopped.] The

proper thing to do would be to clear Halfiyeh camp of the Arabs before coming up here. You would then communicate with Kartoum by land, and avoid having to run the gauntlet of Arab guns in penny steamers."

And on the 14th December, when he wrote the last words which have reached us, he says—

"If I were in command of the two hundred men of the expeditionary force which are all that are necessary for the movement, I should stop just below Halfiyeh, and attack the Arabs at that place before I came on here to Kartoum. I should then communicate with the North Fort [an outwork of Kartoum on the other side of the Blue Nile], and act according to circumstances."

Such was Gordon's plan for the action of the expeditionary force for his relief. It is entirely contradictory of the opinions which Lord Wolseley attributes to him. It does not relate at all to the attempt to communicate with him, of which he knew nothing, and which was Lord Wolseley's alone. Whether Wilson knew of these opinions of Gordon is doubtful: if he did, he could not have acted on them, his force on the Nile being already dangerously weak. It is impossible for us to reconcile, or to attempt to reconcile, Lord Wolseley's version of Gordon's opinions with Gordon's own.

As to the supposition, "had Sir C. Wilson's steamers reached Kartoum on the 25th instead of the 28th January," what possible object can be gained by stating it, when we know that the steamers were not reported by Lord C. Beresford as repaired and ready for a fresh start till 3 P.M. on the 22d, as testified by Lord Hartington in the House of Commons on the 14th April last?—and on that day they were used for the most necessary trip down the river. It was impossible, therefore, that they could

reach Kartoum on the 25th ; and the imputation on Wilson conveyed by the passage is, in any case, without foundation. But it is to be noted that here Lord Wolseley is taking absolutely new ground ; for, having sent Wilson to communicate with Gordon, he is here implying that his duty was to relieve him.

At this time the Government seems to have become alive to the careful avoidance by Lord Wolseley of all approval of Wilson ; not one word of commendation had he given to the victor of Gubat,—a fact which had been noticed early in February in the London press. On the 11th February Lord Hartington telegraphs to Lord Wolseley : “ Express warm recognition of Government of brilliant services of Sir Charles Wilson, and satisfaction at gallant rescue of his party.” Now it is a remarkable fact that this telegram is omitted from the published parliamentary papers. More than a month later, Wilson seems to have been called on for a statement of the occupation of the interval between his arrival on the Nile and his departure for Kartoum. Accordingly, on the 23d March he wrote the report which, in reply to a question, Lord Hartington, on 15th May, said should be laid on the table, and which is now before us. In it Wilson sets forth the situation of his force on the 21st, when the steamers reached him. It had been much weakened by the heavy losses of the 17th and 19th ; it was to be further diminished by the return of the convoy and escort to Gakdul, and it was hampered by the large number of wounded. The men, too (this he does not say in the report, but elsewhere), were quite exhausted with the fighting and want of sleep—horses and camels were knocked up. And besides the presence of

the enemy’s garrison in Metammeh, there were rumours of hostile forces advancing on both sides. He had, therefore, urgently to provide for the defence of his camp. This anxious condition of affairs continued up to the afternoon of the 22d, when the steamers were repaired and ready. “ The only day,” says Wilson, “ that might have been saved was the 22d, as the reconnaissance showed that the force had nothing to fear from the Berber direction.” He means that it might have been saved had he known the real state of the case ; but he did not know it, and it was most necessary to ascertain it. There remains the 23d. Of this day he says—

“ General Gordon, in a most characteristic letter, addressed to the Chief of the Staff, or to the Officer Commanding the British advanced-guard, insisted strongly on our taking actual command of the steamers, and removing from them all Pashas, Boys, and men of Turk, or Egyptian origin. He wrote in strong terms of the uselessness of these men in action, and begged that, if the boats were not manned by British sailors, they should be sent back to him with none but Soudanese crews and soldiers. It was originally intended that the steamers should be manned by the Naval Brigade, but Lord Charles Beresford was in hospital, unable to walk, and all the other officers of the Brigade, and several of the best petty officers and men, had been killed or wounded. It was therefore impossible to carry out the original plan ; and though Lord Charles Beresford, in the most gallant way, offered to accompany me, I felt that I could not deprive the force of the only naval officer with it, especially as the steamers left behind might be called upon at any time to take part in active operations against the enemy. It was therefore necessary to select Soudanese officers, crews, and soldiers from the four ships, and to transfer them to the two steamers going to Kartoum. This was the chief reason for the delay on the 23d.”

Now, even supposing that a few hours of daylight could have been saved on the 23d—and we do not know that they could; on the contrary, we gather from the report that they could not—yet, even then, the steamers could not have reached Kartoum till late on the 27th, the day after the fall of the place. The point is therefore of absolutely no importance to the issue. Unless Wilson had left his exhausted force unfortified and exposed to attack, and had embarked in steamers unprepared for the voyage, which Gordon held to be so perilous, he could not have reached Kartoum even on the 26th. It appears not only an absurdity, but a mischievous absurdity, to charge a man who had done so much in such harassing circumstances with not doing more. To our mind he needed no defence, and ought not to have undergone the imputation implied in the demand for explanation.

This report was sent home by Lord Wolseley, with a letter from himself, which we here give entire.

“CAIRO, 13th April, 1885.

“MY LORD,—I have the honour to forward a letter from Colonel Sir C. Wilson, R.E., giving the reasons for the delay in the departure of the steamers from Gubat.

“I do not propose to add any remarks of my own to this letter. The reasons given by Sir Charles Wilson must speak for themselves—I have, &c.,
WOLSELEY, General.

“The Right Hon.

MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON, M.P.”

Now this is a letter which may be read in two ways. Had Lord Wolseley made previous mention of Sir C. Wilson's conduct with approval, it might mean that it was obviously and completely satisfactory. But it must be taken in connection not only with careful avoidance of approval, but of what

is implied in Lord Wolseley's despatch of the 15th February, and must be read as declining to say a word which might tend to absolve Wilson.

We need hardly say that the whole theory that Gordon's rescue was possible, even by Wolseley's whole force, had it reached the Nile before Nelson's scanty column got there, rests upon nothing but wild assumption. The truth of the matter is, we doubt not, that put forth as his opinion by Lord Granville in the House of Lords on the 18th May. He said :—

“The noble earl said it did not signify what the cause was that took us to the Soudan. I am bound to say it signifies very much. It was, if possible, to save General Gordon. I do not believe it was a question of time—that is purely a matter of opinion. I believe that treachery would have had effect at whatever time the relief expedition might have arrived.”

So say we, and we will give a reason for the belief which Lord Granville would naturally abstain from. The Mahdi (as will be found, we believe, in Gordon's diary) knew of our declared intention to abandon the Soudan after the rescue of Gordon. He had means of constantly communicating with the troops in Kartoum. He would therefore argue with them in this cogent fashion: The English are coming to take away Gordon, and will then quit the Soudan. The defence of the place depends upon Gordon. Without him and without the English you cannot keep me out. If I capture the place by force, I will kill every man. But if you agree to admit me when I shall desire it, I will spare you and take you into my service.” It is no wonder that these poor Egyptians, who owed no fealty to us, or even to Gordon, if he

should depart and leave them, took this proposal into serious consideration, and that some at least were ready to accept the conditions. And as to the time, the Mahdi desired to defer the surrender till some of our troops should be lured to cross the desert, when he hoped to destroy them—a result nearly accomplished. The city, with Gordon in it, was used as a bait. What finally decided him was the arrival of our troops on the Nile. For all he knew, we might advance in force to raise the siege—and thereupon he put his foot down.

It is fortunate for Sir Charles Wilson that the vague charges against him have been brought to a head in a cruel and unwarrantable attack published in a monthly periodical. A Mr Williams, the correspondent with Stewart's column of the 'Daily Chronicle,' has written a paper ascribing to Sir Charles Wilson the whole blame for the failure to rescue Gordon, in language so injurious that nobody can suppose it to be inspired only by a desire to impart unbiassed facts. All the delays that took place in resolving on the expedition, in starting it, and in conducting it, so far as it went, are as nothing (according to this writer) compared with the space of two days between the time of the arrival of the steamers at Gubat and Wilson's departure in them to Kartoum. The most offensive charges are made with reference to his conduct both at Gubat and in sight of Kartoum. But this Mr Williams is actually the same person who has already written accounts of the expedition to the 'Daily Chronicle,' speaking of the object of his spite in very

different terms. Thus, he said in that paper of January 29th: "Sir C. Wilson has now in command, cool; collected, meeting each move of the enemy, noting weak points. . . . A commander of weaker fibre might well have hesitated, but not so Colonel Wilson, who did not fear to realise that the risk must be taken." Will it be believed that he now writes in the periodical: "A soldier should not have hesitated; Sir Charles Wilson hesitated"! Again, he said in the 'Daily Chronicle' of February 12: "Sir Charles Wilson, . . . with that boldness and resolution which characterized his conduct at the battle of Gubat"; but now in the periodical: "If I differ from this, it is only in wondering if he had any nerve to lose." Lieutenant Stuart-Wortley's diary, published in the 'London Gazette,' says: "January 24.—Left Metammeh at 8 A.M. in steamer." Mr Williams says: "It was high noon on Saturday the 24th before he went." But it is unnecessary to pursue this distasteful subject further. No one who has read what we have written will think the attack worthy of the slightest credit, and its readers will be disposed to agree with us that nothing but the competition for notoriety could have induced a periodical which valued its own self-respect to be made the vehicle of such aspersions on a brave and devoted officer.

We trust we have said enough to induce any reader, even if prejudiced on the other side, to pause before imputing any failure to perform his duty to an officer whose devotion to Gordon was well known, and who would have rejoiced to make any sacrifice in his behalf.

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